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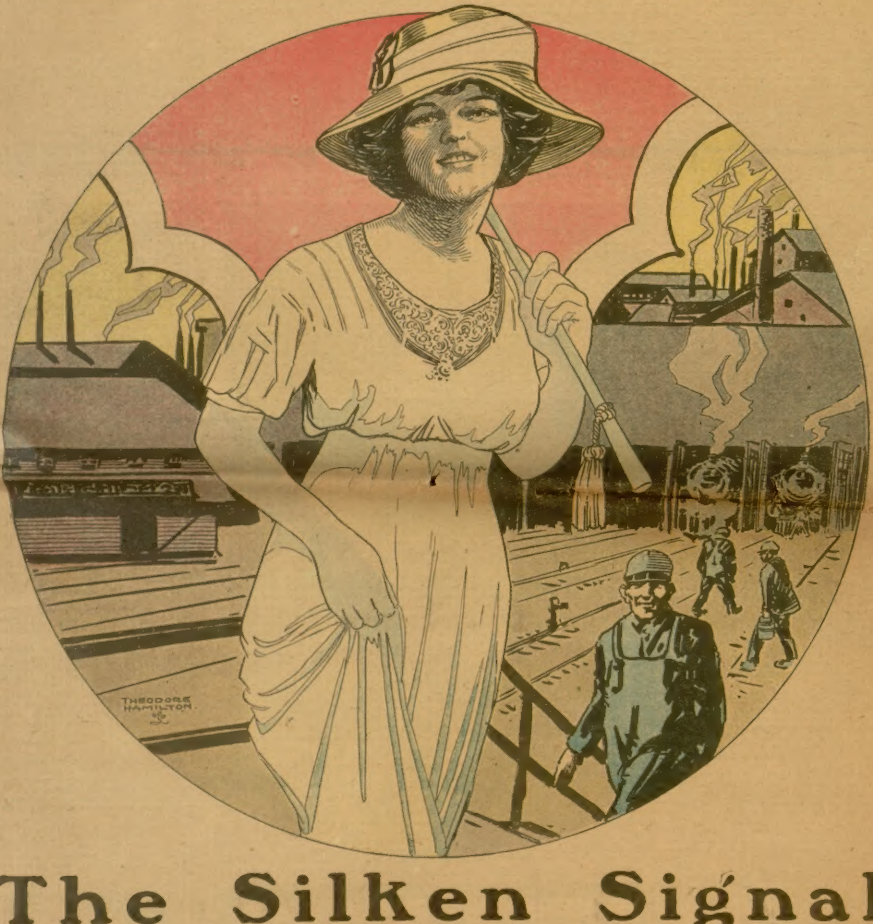

The Silken Signal

-:- Or, -:-

Hancock's Coup

By Alvah Milton Kerr

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HOW he achieved the thing is, of course, a matter of record. Burke's private journal of heroic feats on the Western Central contains an account of it, entered by the superintendent himself in plain black and white. But the "why" of it is scarcely indicated in Burke's chronicle, matters of the heart not being likely to figure conspicuously in a railroad superintendent's record of "signal instances of bravery, presence of mind, and fidelity to duty in employes." Hence this fuller history.

Waddington Hancock, as a name, seemed indicative of estate and functions rather beyond the pretensions and appearance of the young fellow, but he always dashed the title upon the Western Central pay roll with a flourish good to see. His chirography had something of the large boldness of John Hancock's signature to the Declaration of Independence. It presented the same scorn of space, together with a carelessness of position and direction and a bounding swoop of line and curve that even the famous Declarer's signature could not boast. It was also commonly emphasized on the pale blue sheet by thumb and finger marks eloquent of coal and smutted waste, for a locomotive fireman does not usually wash his hands before jumping out of the gangway to scramble into the pay-car after his "dough." The roll-clerk invariably squirmed with appreciation of the length and breadth of the space that was being occupied as he watched the construction of the signature, but Martin Bonner, paymaster, who himself always handed the checks across the tiny counter of the Gazelle, usually laughed and rubbed his florid bald head and winked. The young man's signature was, somehow, singularly consonant with his physical aspect. He had long feet, long, well-shaped hands, a straight steel-post sort of body, a backward springing spine, and a round, yellowish, handsome head. His eyes were not large, but disturbingly direct and of a laughing, gleaming blue. With his quick, bold, erect air he had a soft, musical voice and usually was sparing of words. Once, anent a quip of Bonner's relative to his soft voice, the young fellow winked and said:

"Do I write loud enough?"

"Loud!" laughed Bonner; "your writing is simply thunder!"

The fireman winked again peculiarly, and, taking his check, went out of the pay car.

One thing, Wadd liked to sing. That was his weakness, or his strength, as one is pleased to view it. Wadd's path homeward did not naturally lie by way of the residence of Master Mechanic Addicks, but with the advent of Daffy Tuttle, his niece, a subtle influence seemed always to persuade his feet to make the little journey by that particular street, and it was noticeable that his vocal performance invariably reached its climax in the immediate region of the Addicks' home. Wadd being engaged in firing passenger on the East End—that is, from Paley Fork to Denver and return—the schedule put him down at the Fork near midnight, with the result that the M. M., being awakened by the youth's soaring tenor, had frequent occasion to shift his iron-gray head upon his pillow and profane the darkness with protesting vocables. But always there was something of a wholly different sort exuding from one of the gable windows—something that sounded like the very soft clapping together of little hands, tender, approving, sympathetic. Tommy Loomis, one of our way operators in the dispatcher's office, touched with suspicious restlessness since Daffy's arrival, had unwisely attempted a sneering stricture relative to "her coal-pounding boy soprano," with the result that Daffy's black eyes had grown fiery as she announced the opinion that "pounding coal for the fire-box of the big 1202 was somewhat more manly than pounding the brass of a telegraph-key, and that Mr. Hancock's voice was not soprano, but a very beautiful high tenor," which was quite sufficient to, and did, settle Tommy. It was soon clear, at least to most of us, that Daffy and the crack fireman of the East End were something more than favorable to each other.

Daffy—her real name was Daphne—was from up Cheyenne way. Jack Tuttle, her father, was for long an engineer on the U. P. He was pulling the Fast Mail when he was killed. That occurred in the wreck occasioned by the Blue Run flood. Addicks was also from the U. P. Therefore Daffy, tho the expression itself rings odd, was distinctly of railroad stock. From childhood she had been acquainted with locomotives and locomotive folk. Throttles, cylinder saddles, balanced valves, exhaust ports, eccentrics, check valves, injectors, air drums, rockers, spring hangers, reverse levers, and the like were well-nigh as familiar to her as pins and needles. She had seen engines made, or, rather, what was [illegible] many [illegible] seen all the parts of locomotives disassociated, repaired, and reassembled. She had played in roundhouses and car shops as a child, had held the throttle of her father's engine many times in tomboy days, and still liked better than food to hang out of a cab window and feel the steel fabric roll and plunge as she watched the drivers dissolve into whirling cobwebs beneath her.

Still, Daffy was girlish and pretty—outrageously pretty, some women secretly thought—and she could "trim" hats and play the piano. Old Addicks had been heard to growl that he had not been able to make out which was the more likely to induce lockjaw, Daffy's playing or Wadd's singing. However, the M. M. was proverbially ungracious to lovers.

The M. M. was a widower (grass) and was acid of speech and porcupine of posture touching things matrimonial. His experience of love and marriage had apparently left a deposit of conclusions in his mind similar in irritating quality to pounded glass in the blood. Nevertheless, he was a just man, or, at least, aimed to be.

As for Daffy, small as she was, she was a thing of magnitude in the affairs of Paley Fork, and admittedly Paley Fork was blessed with numerous maids and matrons, and was the abiding-place of men who measurably quickened or restricted the functioning of human life thruout a good many leagues both east and west. There was something peculiarly piquant about the girl. She had a fashion of glancing around quickly, of airily tipping her head and body about, of poising a moment to fling out a word or note of laughter and hurry away, that suggested a little brown wren, bright-eyed, jaunty, deliciously impudent.

When, on her way to the postoffice or the milliner's, she came down the long platform of the station, gowned in white pique, small French heels tapping on the hot planks and black eyes glancing from under a red parasol that looked like a big, lacy, flopping poppy, then something magnetic and unexplainable swept thru the division offices. At any rate, in such moments apparently half our number felt it necessary to seek the windows in search of expected trains, fresh air, or to look for some one out in the yards.

Over in the great roundhouse, too, when Daffy came down, as she often did, clad in a golf suit, with a jockey cap skewered to a topknot of tomboy curls, and climbed into some outgoing engine, to return by the first engine met with out on the line, there was a swift and nervous adjustment by the men of coat collars, a straightening of mustaches, an all-around attempt to look pretty that was pitiably male. Truly, it looked difficult for Wadd.

Tho several members of the force were "languishing" at Daffy, the stiffest obstruction impeding the flow of Wadd's inclination was probably Addicks' antipathy. Obviously the fireman was very much in the master mechanic's power; besides, Daffy, being without living parents and committed to her uncle's keeping, was hardly as free as the proverbial bird in the matter of mating. The M. M. mentally admitted that there were few men on the Western Central who could keep so high and even a pressure of steam in an engine boiler under all conditions as could young Hancock, but he did hate a man who sang high tenor and who was in love. Such a person much perforce be contemptibly weak. The M. M. himself possessed a voice like a bass-drum with loose nails in it; he was deep-chested, big-headed, grizzly; as for love—was he not a widower, and "sour grass" at that?

But back of his personal prejudice, and sinking deeper roots in his mind, was a notion that, at heart, Fireman Hancock was a coward and a quitter. A story that was not at all pretty had come up to us from the K. P., where Wadd began firing, to the effect that the young man once jumped when he ought to have stuck; that his desertion of an engine in a certain crisis had cost human lives. Tommy Loomis brought the story.

Sifted, the main facts seemed as follows: Engine 999, Lyon engineer, Hancock fireman, pulling a K. P. express, oddly collided head on with the Fast Mail near a station named Peter Bend. The express had orders to hold at Peter Bend for the mail, but went by the station very fast, striking the mail disastrously a quarter of a mile beyond the station. Lyon, dead, was found close to the station, Hancock was found just beyond the station creeping about in an open lot in an apparently dazed condition. He had jumped, he afterward stated, when the engines were not more than a hundred feet apart, and had fancied that he was crawling back to warn a train that he thought was following. He stated, also, that just when Lyon was about to shut off steam for Peter Bend the driving-rod on the right-hand side snapped, knocking off the side of the cab and killing Lyon instantly; that both the reverse apparatus and throttle lever were smashed and could not be operated; that he had tried his best to reverse and shut off, but found it impossible; that he had clung to the engine until death breathed in his face; then he had jumped. Just how he had got back nearly a quarter of a mile and into the [illegible] lot he did not [illegible] From certain view-points Wadd's explanation of his personal conduct in the affair looked fishy. There were people who believed that he had not attempted to avert the wreck, but had quit the engine in panic immediately after the breaking of the driving-rod, else he would not have been found so near the station. Lyon's engine had been fearfully shattered in the collision and fell upon her right side, crushing her levers; therefore Wadd's statement could neither be verified nor disproved. The K. P. people had been willing to continue him in their employ, but Wadd, not relishing expressions of doubt and hints that probably his cowardice had occasioned loss of life, quit in wrathful disgust, and presently came to the Western Central. The odd thing is that history should have so nearly repeated itself for Wadd, that the Puma Point tragedy afterward set him in a theater of action so closely paralleling the K. P. affair. We all wondered at that.

One morning in February the M. M. sent for Wadd. The youth had been visiting Daffy twice each week and indulging nocturnal carolings along her street thru several months. He was fully aware that he had rivals, but was beginning to feel sure of his place in her esteem. He was not nearly so sure of his place on the Western Central. As he walked down to the roundhouse he wondered if Addicks had not concluded to push him from his position. It certainly looked an easy solution of the Daffy problem.

Arriving at the roundhouse, the M. M. led Wadd to the 1202, and there angrily took him to task touching the condition of the engine's crown-sheet. Wadd made a brief examination and explained, showing the master mechanic how, owing to a warp occasioned by the furnace coming in contact with snow, the dampers had acted defectively during the run ended the night before, thus endangering the crown-sheet. Obviously, the fault did not lie with the fireman; at least, it had not lain within his power to escape the risk that had been taken. Addicks saw this, but was the more enraged. He had hoped that Wadd could not explain.

"Oh, well," he said, impatiently slamming a wrench into a tool-box, "you are an excuse-maker, anyway. You always manage to creep round things."

Wadd's eyes blazed against the older man's face thru a second or two. "On the contrary, Mr. Addicks, I never creep around anything, and I shall not creep around you." He spoke steadily but with rising voice.

"Don't brag," rasped Addicks. When angry his voice was as soothing as the sound of a saw ripping into iron. "You explained about the K. P. wreck, I understand, but I don't believe the stuff you told about it, not a word of it. You crept round the truth, in my opinion, and what's more, I believe you were a coward then and still have the streak in you." At heart he was railing about Wadd and Daffy.

"What makes you think me a liar and a coward?" asked Wadd, with a smile, tho his nostrils were growing thin and spotted.

"Because no man with straw-colored hair and a tenor voice could be anything else," said Addicks brutally.

The fireman's entire face went greenish-white. He walked close up to the master mechanic and looked him in the eyes for a moment, then suddenly Addicks felt himself literally lifted by the throat and hurled headlong into one of the roundhouse ash-pits. When he had scrambled out, and had secured a crank-pin with which to brain this extraordinary creature, Wadd was walking out of the big door, erect as a ramrod and reeking contempt from every pore. The next morning he entered the office of the master mechanic and said:

"Well, have you my time made out?"

"I never discharge employes for personal reasons," rasped Addicks. "When you've injured the company, you'll get your time quick enough. Continue your present run."

Wadd softened. "Mr. Addicks," he began, "I feel like I had been too hasty. I would like to——"

"Nothing of the kind. Drop it," snapped the old man. "I'll send for you when I want you. Good morning."

When, a few minutes later, Wadd came by the water-tank on his way home, he leaned against an upright of the tank and strangled, ending his laugh with a gasping howl.

But Addicks did not erase himself by any means; he notified Wadd in writing to keep away from the house and his niece. He hotly took Daffy to task, but Daffy only twinkled her black eyes and kissed him, and said that of course Mr. Hancock should come to the house when he liked. Addicks ordered her to pack her things and go back to Cheyenne and remain with her Aunt Sue, Addicks' sister; but Daffy never budged. She laughingly assured him that she knew precisely what he needed, and that was for some one of exactly her age and particular style of beauty to play the piano and assist the housekeeper to spend his money; so she remained.

In the headquarters building we chuckled; truth, for once, was almost as attractive as fiction. Superintendent Burke told the master mechanic to discharge Wadd at once. The idea! Such insubordination could not be countenanced for an instant. Addicks refused point-blank. Burke said he would himself discharge the fireman. Addicks said if he did he would have to discharge him, also. Truth was leaving fiction far to the rear! Addicks said the affair was a personal one; he had called the young man a coward; the fireman had not responded exactly like one. The M. M. would like well enough to get rid of him, but not in that way. Burke washed his hands of the affair.

Tho Daffy had said that, of course, Wadd should come to see her whenever he chose, the fireman refused to put his foot across Addicks' threshold. When Daffy met him and urged him to call he laughingly dissented.

"It wouldn't be right, hardly decent, it seems to me," he said. "The gov'nor's word goes when it comes to his own house. He don't need to get out a Government injunction. He owns his home, but he doesn't own you, little girl; that's diamonds of a different water, you know."

Daffy suggested that she might meet him once a week at the home of a common friend. Wadd shook his head. "That's sneaky," he said; "I don't like it. If you happen to be down at the foot of North avenue occasionally when I get in from my run, I'll walk home with you. I'd like that. Seems to me when it comes to the streets we have certain inalienable rights without straining the Constitution, even of Colorado. Then there's the stars and the moon and the mountains, and Jackson's livery stable with lots of buggies in it; besides you might come down now and then and take a ride on the 1202. You can hold the glim while I break coal, and maybe Pap will let you squeeze the choker." They both fell to laughing. Daffy set her right foot forward, thrust her right arm straight up in the air and struck a goddess-of-liberty pose.

"By the divine right vested in the natural constitution of every fair maiden I here declare——" She stopped.

"Declare what?" asked Wadd.

She twinkled her eyes at him. "That maybe I will."

The winter wore on and the weeks drew into March. Day by day a moist freshness breathed across the mountains. The peaks pushed back their silver hoods, shook out yellow locks of sunshine, and smiled. The canyons echoed with the cymbal-shock of swollen streams, valleys grew green as ocean hollows, miners went reluctantly into the workings, railroad men wished they were farmers, and Wadd Hancock, with enlarging heart-hunger, wanted Daffy.

Singing along the "ole man's" street one night as he returned from his run, the girl fluttered out to him from Addicks' gate, and the pair walked up North avenue until they were on the base of Sacket Mountain. A vague, whitish world spread about and below them in the moonlight. They sat down on a shelf of stone beside the road and for a time were silent.

"I wonder when something will happen—something that will change Uncle Stephen," said Daffy.

Wadd laid his cap on the ground and pushed back his hair. "When it does happen I expect I'll get fired," he said.

The girl sat silently looking at the filmy mountain range across the valley. Her dark eyes glistened. "When it happens you'll get an engine; I've been concentrating," she said.

He laughed and arose and stepped into the road. He picked up a stone and threw it far down the slope. When the stone had fallen and was silent he turned back to her. "Well, we've been hitting high joints and grades most of the way so far," he said. "With the M. M. flagging and trying to turn switches on us, and the gang generally piling ties on the track, it don't look like it could be any worse running if we coupled up and went double-header. What do you say, little girl?"

The wine in Daffy's cheeks deepened its rose. "You mustn't get impatient or discouraged, big boy," she laughed. "Remember that all things come to him who waits."

"That is exactly the trouble," declared Wadd; "all things do come. If only some things came to him who waited there would be more sense in the scheme. But all things come—trouble and hot boxes and open switches generally—so I prefer not to wait."

Daffy put her hands in his and looked up at him. "You are a good fireman, you've got my heart very warm," she laughed, adopting his fashion of metaphor; "but do you think we ought to pull out without the consent of the master mechanic?"

"Run on orders if you can. If you can't get orders go ahead on your time-card rights; that is my doctrine," laughed Wadd. He saw stars swimming in her upturned eyes; his face grew grave and tender.

Daffy drew him down and took his face between her hands and looked into his eyes long and soberly. Tremblingly she touched her lips to his. "Dear," she whispered, "you have the signal to go ahead."

This explains why Daffy temporarily abjured the piano for the needle, why she wrote to Aunt Sue at Cheyenne, and why Aunt Sue sent her two hundred dollars. It also explains why she deadheaded over to Denver and ordered from a modiste the historic crepe de chine and lace wedding-gown that played so important a part in the Puma Point tragedy. Daffy visited Denver a second time to have the gown fitted; then, when it would have received the last stitch, Wadd was to bring the beautiful and precious "creation" home to Paley Fork. Very naturally Daffy desired that her marriage vows should be solemnized in Stephen Addicks' best parlor and with proper eclat. Wadd also would have liked that, but after one had thrown the owner of the house into an ash-pit and

IN THIS issue of the Ledger appears another thrilling railroad story, entitled "The Silken Signal; or, Hancock's Coup." Do not miss it. Look out next week for the Christmas number of the Ledger, for it will be full of good things, among them a most interesting story by Wilder Anthony, called "The River Rat; or, The Perry Plates." Boys, watch out for a new serial by Milford Merrill, entitled "The Boy Skipper; or, The Skylark's Cruise." You will find it fascinating from start to finish. Some of the best stories in all the history of the Ledger will appear in these papers during the next few months. If you want to make some one a present, why not give him or her a year's subscription to the LEDGER? They would get lots of entertainment and fun out of it. Try it once.

brought upon him a very appreciable measure of derision, one could hardly expect to harvest a comforting crop of consideration.

"Never mind," said Wadd to Daffy, "We can be married over at the parsonage, or, if the preacher's 'best' isn't big enough to hold our friends, we can hire a hall. I've got some joyous rags being tied together over at Bunker's tog factory. They'll be done in a few days, and when that dazzling affair of yours gets in from Denver, we'll be ready to meet all comers. I've rented the Cupple cottage, but I guess we'd better not buy the furniture until after this matrimonial sunburst has been flashed on your uncle. I may have to go hunting a job, you know."

Daffy believed that she could win her uncle's consent, and was daily noting his moods, awaiting the psychic moment when he should seem least resistant. One evening she dropped a hint. Like magic powder, it produced a smoke of sulphuric rhetoric. Daffy waited.

On the sixth day of April Wadd found that the bridal dress was ready for transit. Trainmen on the West End as well as several on the East End remember the day. Away out in Bear Paw canyon there was a bad slide and a wreck; and Puma Point! That would be hard to forget. Wadd brought the gown from the modiste in a green pasteboard box. The package was too large to go into the seat-box on the fireman's side of the 1202, so he placed it on the front end of the seat in the window-niche, tying it fast with twine and weighting it down with the iron head of a coal maul. To Wadd the box had a quality of life, speeding a thrill of pleasure along his nerves each time that he looked at it. Big, gray, corpulent Pap Gundy, the engineer, glanced at the box as he climbed into the cab and stood for a moment with his hand pressed against his heart, laboring for breath.

"More duds, eh?" he panted.

"Yep, more duds," replied Wadd, glancing at the gauges.

The old engineer put his foot on the step and ran his eye across the tremulous gauge-needles. "Son, I don't feel a bit good," he said. "Do you know, I believe that a hair about two foot long has grown inward from my chest and wrapped itself around my heart, and it's tightening up little by little every day. Going t' stop the pump one of these days, I'm afraid." He shook with slow laughter.

Wadd laid his hand lightly on the old man's shoulder. "You're joshing, Pap. You're the healthiest-looking man I know; it's sure all right," he said.

"Of course, son, of course; but it feels like a strangling hair." He slowly climbed to his seat on the right-hand shoulder of the mighty machine. From the fuel-deck Wadd could see no more of him than the outline of his back and right shoulder.

Exactly on time the great compound, with a quickening series of crashing exhausts, moved out of the shed with her string of coaches and made off toward the mountains thru the falling dusk. She went purring, but with a hoarse depth of breath befitting her monstrous lungs; she rolled on her springs, but majestically and in keeping with the staying power of her two hundred thousand pounds of close-knit steel. She obeyed the throttle like a lamb, but her hunger for coal! Wadd was never at rest a moment. His hand seemed always reaching for the door-chain, and coal seemed forever spraying from his shovel into the hot mouth that ceaselessly growled and hissed with appetite. Following level rails southwestward thru the first hour, she whipped the coaches along like a string of toys, but the lift of the foot-hills forced her to heavy breathing. Wadd tore open his shirt collar and rolled his sleeves to his elbows. It took a real master of the maul and shovel to keep breath in that prodigious chest.

By nine o'clock they were at Barn Butte, a sort of assistant division station at the eastern base of the Cradle Range. There Jim Downey with the 1300, a huge decapod, hooked in as pusher and helped them to the summit. By eleven o'clock, having left Downey behind, the 1202 was bellowing on the western slope of the range, her steel skull lowered toward the Sandrill. Tho the air of this soaring region was chill, Pap Gundy sat among his levers hatless and in his shirt-sleeves and with both windows wide. For the most part he sat poring on the two streaks of steel that spun toward him thru the broad glare of the headlight, but at times the bright rails seemed to him only thin wires running thru air and sinking under the weight of the engine. In such moments he would look away quickly to the stars and straighten up with a deep breath and shake himself. Taking a train filled with humanity down the grades of the Cradle Range was hardly a feat admitting of vertigo or dreams.

With Wadd matters were now easier. Occasionally he jumped upon the fireman's seat, and with his hand resting on the precious box also looked at the stars. Everywhere the mountain tops seemed caught and swaying in a silvery net. There was no visible moon; on the mountains rested a vast silence thru which the 1202 crashed heavily, falling ward the valley twenty miles away. At Bonebreak, halfway down the range, Bunch Wilson, who was at the train-sheet in Paley Fork, caught them and gave them an order to meet eastbound passenger Number 2 at Puma Point Siding, nine miles west of Bridge Station, the regular meeting-point. Bridge Station was on the Sandrill River at the base of the range. Crossing the stream there, the track followed the river up the canyon, past Queen Cove Mine and Puma Point Siding, and wound westward over the base of Silver Mountain toward Paley Fork.

Leaving the Fork that night, Number 2 was twenty-six minutes late, and had to be helped to the siding with an order. In the coaches Bob French was handling tickets, in the cab Sandy McBinn was at the throttle, and with him was Stephen Addicks, watching the working of a hoped-for improvement he had contrived in the grate-shaking apparatus. The M. M. was in a mood malefic. The shaker had not performed satisfactorily, and the fireman, in attempting to force it to effective service, had jammed his right hand cruelly. He could do but little, and since the train was already behind time, McBinn descended to the fuel-deck and wielded the shovel while Addicks took the valve levers. Driving an engine was as familiar to the M. M. as waste and overalls, and he brought Number 2 down the line at a clip that made the coaches rock and squeak on the curves.

"Guess Sandy must be trying t' show the old man what he can do." French remarked to one of the brakemen. "Hope he don't slue us into the canyon when we come down around Puma Point."

"Well, if th' ole man stands for it s'pose we'll have to."

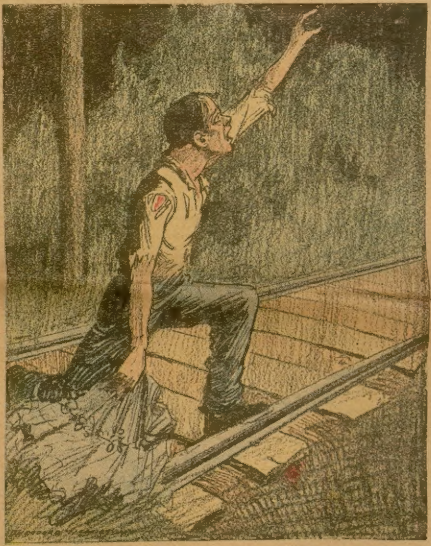
They did not know that the master mechanic's hand was on the throat-lever, nor did Addicks, with his steel-gray eyes set steadily on the forward point of the wedge of light swiftly splitting the gloom ahead, know that he was whirling Number 2 toward an oncoming train with a dead man at the throttle. Addicks proposed to take Number 2 into Denver on time.

And Gundy—no one on the express knew! He brought his train down the range to the Sandrill and across to Bridge Station in good order, tho a trifle fast. He shut off a little late at Bridge Station and ran past, stopping at the water-tank instead of the station, which was queer. When they pulled out he gave the 1202 her head so suddenly that persons on the train who chanced to be standing were jerked nearly off their feet. That was the last time Pap opened a valve. His broad left hand remained on the lever, gripped into a hard, hairy knot, his right clutched the window-sill like a vise, and he lurched forward with his chin on his chest, staring at his feet and swaying a little, death's frost in his eyes.

Wadd was busy. From Bridge Station to the Fork the 1202 would eat coal like an orecrusher. She went up the dark canyon along the Sandrill with her exhausts beating a steady roar. Where was the use of Pap making a run for Silver Mountain, Wadd asked himself, when they had to stop at the siding? He glanced at the outline of the engineer's back and wondered. Yet, surely the old man knew his business.

They swept by the vast gash in the mountain's base where lay Queen Cove Mine, and onward thru cuts and over fills, the coaches rolling in the wake of the rushing machine. The hoarse buzz in the engine's throat deepened as she turned slightly from the river and began to plant her whirling feet on the base of Silver Mountain, and Wadd, pounding coal under her busily, his brain aswim with Daffy and the sumptuous gown and the portents of the morrow, gave small heed to his whereabouts until, with a shock of realization that nipped his hair-roots with cold, he saw that they had rushed by the siding and were rounding Puma Point. Instantly he leaped into the gangway, and swinging outward by the hand-rods, threw a quick glance back. The siding was surely vanishing eastward? At that the conductor's bell-cord wrenched sharply, giving the stop signal. With a gasp of horror Wadd sprang across the fuel-deck and up the steps to Gundy's seat. He snatched the engineer roughly about the shoulders.

"Pap! What do you mean? What are you trying to do?"



He saw the headlight of Number 2 half a mile away.

The gray head rolled back against the fireman's shoulder, the unseeing, frosty eyes close to the young man's face.

For a moment the fireman stared down upon the unearthly countenance, his faculties frozen by what he saw, then he lunged at the throttle. The dead man's hand seemed shrunk upon the lever like a claw of chilled iron. The youth laid hold of it and wrenched it away, then his hand flew back to the lever to shut off steam. But in that instant, as if stretching forth his hand conjured destruction, the 1202 crashed and leaped and seemingly rent herself into fragments. Wadd felt himself strike the fuel-deck, fire gushed from his eyes, he felt one of his legs snap, and somehow realized that bowlders and mud and logs were hurling over him. The next moment, as it might be, he felt himself thrashed upon the earth. The green box lay crushed beneath his breast; things, he knew not what, were piled upon him. He felt flattened, pinioned, smothering; he must have air or perish. With a heave and wrench that seemed fit to tear the muscles from his bones he got his head above the ruck of stuff and drew himself out. He reached in and pulled the crushed box after him. Even in that moment of bewilderment something within him asked what Daffy would think should he lose the wedding gown. They were in an earthslide that had rolled down from Puma Point. The 1202 had driven almost thru it, and now lay upon her back with her drivers in the air. The train, stretched in the mucky stuff, twisted and toppled grotesquely; the coaches rang with human cries. The Pintsch lights were burning in some of the coaches, perhaps the red lamps were aglow at the rear; but evidently the conductor and brakemen were struggling somewhere in the half-buried wreck.

Something, a kind of lightning, blazed thru the fireman's brain: In three or four minutes Number 2, an inconceivable weight of iron and wood and humanity, would rush down Puma Grade and drive into the helpless mass in the cut. He seemed suddenly baptized in fire. He threw a glance about him; there was no lantern or means of signaling at hand. Like a swimmer who blows back engulfing waters with long breaths and fights toward some point whereon life waits but a moment beckoning, he began crawling madly ahead along the track, dragging the torn box and his dangling leg after him. If he could but reach the western end of the first bend, some three or four hundred feet distant! Beyond that there was a little stretch of straight track, and, could he set the wedding-gown on fire, McBinn might possibly see the signal in time to get his train under control before he struck the hapless coaches in the cut.

He went like an insane man. Back of him there was yelling and a turmoil of noise; away in front of him a mighty, jostling thing was roaring down the grade; but he heard nothing, only his breath gasping and pulses pounding and the bones of his broken leg rasping. The pasteboard box went entirely in pieces; he flung the lacy gown back over his shoulders and scrambled onward over the ties. Tho it seemed a monstrous stretch of years, in three minutes he was at the end of the curve. He looked up and saw the headlight of Number 2 half a mile away; he glanced back at the wrecked express; it seemed fearfully near. But he could do no better. With trembling hand he tore some matches from the "pipe" pocket of his flannel shirt and raked a bunch of them along one of the rails. He drew the beautiful gown before him and thrust the blazing matches among the lace. Flames leaped up as from ignited corn-silk; the gauzy fabric began to writhe and flash. Seizing it in both hands he rose on the knee of his uninjured leg and waved it wildly to and fro above his head. The flames of it burned him, the curling laces trickled down upon him like melting lead, but he felt nothing, heard nothing, only lashed the blazing gown back and forth, yelling with all his lungs.

Piled against the western stars, the mountain masses seemed to sway, the headlight of the oncoming train rocked and [illegible]cally, then to the young fellow on the track it began [illegible] whirl in vast circles like a stupendous coal of fire, then, as with a wink, it snapped black and all was darkness. In his brain for an instant wavered a dying impulse, a feeling that he was still on his knees flinging the flaming robe back and forth above his head, but in truth he was lying flat across the right-hand rail with his face between the ends of the ties and his scorched fingers clutching the dirt.

On passenger Number 2 fright and commotion had fallen; down in the gloom the iron way had suddenly spouted waving flames. The fire was white—but look at its motion! The engine's chime shrieked once like a bursting trumpet, the reversing lever went over with a crash, air leaped thru the pipes, and the brake-shoes jammed their gritty soles against the flying wheels until the rails flickered with spattering fire, passengers smote the seats in front of them with face or breast, drawheads battered and split, and from end to end the train surged and snarled and shook. Addicks, thrown forward upon his knees, stared ahead with his grizzly face suddenly white as chalk. McBinn leaped into the gangway ready to jump, the fireman forgot his mangled hand and lowered himself to the step, poising to spring. All seemed accomplished in a moment, almost in a breath. The train, skating in fire, quivered and jostled down toward the sputtering wedding-gown and the limp form sprawling across the track. It approached close, almost touched them, then, with a tremor and backward heave of the whole fabric, the train stopped and fell quiet.

McBinn, lantern in hand, was the first man to reach the muffled, muddy figure, but the master mechanic was at McBinn's heels and his arms were the first to encircle the prone shape. He turned the young fellow's face to the light; it was streaked with blood and smeared with wet earth. Addicks was strangely moved. A brakeman and a postal clerk from the express came up, panting and trying to talk.

"What's happened?" growled Addicks.

"We're in a slide. Lot of folks bruised and hurt, I guess; don't think anybody's killed," said the brakeman.

"I stumbled over Pap Gundy by the engine. I'm afraid Pap—he didn't look right," said the postal clerk. The speaker looked pallid in the glare of the headlight.

Addicks was tenderly wiping Wadd's face with his handkerchief. Suddenly

(Continued on Page 8.)

Fires in the Night

-:- Or, -:-

In Pioneer Days

By Willis E. Link

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CHAPTER III.

A MYSTERY AND A RESCUE.

THE next morning Tina came down bright and early and began in earnest to perform her duties, for she had been treated more as a guest the day before. At breakfast she learned that the Olders were childless, their only child having died a few days after its birth. The meal finished, there was an hour of necessary work, then the woman led the girl into the best room and asked her to be seated.

"I am curious to get your history, because you so strongly resemble my brother's wife when she was your age," declared Mrs. Older. "I may say this was something which attracted me when I first saw you."

"Then that picture"—Tina pointed to the one which had attracted her attention the evening before—"is a photograph of your sister-in-law?"

"Yes, taken twenty years ago before she was married. Her name then was Chapin. Were your father or mother related in any way to such a family?" Mrs. Older showed deep interest as she awaited a reply.

"I have never heard either of my parents speak of any such relationship," Tina answered thoughtfully. "I can recall the name, however, for I have heard —I think from mamma—of a family of Chapins who once lived not far from us in Illinois."

"Bill—that's my brother—married there and settled down close to his wife's family, where he lived three or four years; then he pulled out for Iowa and has moved on and off of several farms in different localities," Mrs. Older stated.

"What is your brother's surname?" asked Tina.

"Kingsley," was the reply.

"This surely is queer, but I know the name," said Tina, speaking with increasing excitement. "Soon after my parents were married—I have heard them talk about this—they began housekeeping in Freeport, and living next door was another newly married couple named Kingsley."

"It is queer—indeed, it is strange!" exclaimed Mrs. Older. "[illegible] there was no kind of relationship in any way, but the two families were the closest of friends until the Kingsleys moved away. Indeed, mamma and Mrs. Kingsley kept up a correspondence for several years. I have often heard Daddy say, while we have been rambling over Iowa, that nothing would please him better than to run across Bill Kingsley." And at the reference to her father a little catch came into Tina's voice.

"Well, Bill has moved around a good deal, but I guess he will settle down for good now, for he has bought a quarter-section of prairie just down the road, and will build a house and barn upon that knoll." And Mrs. Older pointed thru the window to a rise of ground a quarter of a mile away. "We look for him any day to arrive and start building—his wife will be here a week or two later. I am really so glad, for I have not seen any of the family since Nettie was a little girl," and a glow of pleasure lit up the woman's face.

"Nettie?" came in a tone of interrogation from Tina.

"This was the only child," Mrs. Older briefly explained.

"Was?" and again the interrogation was plainly apparent.

"Well, I don't know much about it, for Bill wrote so few particulars. Nettie got in with some fellow and ran away with him. I suppose they were married, but Bill disowned the girl, and I doubt if he knows anything about her present whereabouts," and Mrs. Older gave a sigh.

"How sad!" Tina spoke sympathetically.

"But your resemblance to Eliza, my sister-in-law, is very strange," said Mrs. Older, recurring to the beginning of the conversation.

Tina made no reply to this observation, and the conversation drifted into another channel.

That afternoon William Kingsley arrived. He showed great astonishment at the sight of Tina, but he made no remarks indicating curiosity. He was a short, stocky man, something on the order of his sister, Mrs. Older, the girl perceived, and while he was pleasant and affable, she thought there were lines of sternness in his countenance showing that he could shut his door against a wayward daughter.

The day following, Mr. Older and Tina discussed matters, and it was determined not to ask the action of the court in settlement of Robert Pennington's affairs. There was so little property to administer that the cost had better be saved the orphaned girl.

The old team and wagon were brought to the Older farm—they had been cared for at the livery barn in Ledyard, and perhaps it would be well to note here that a great improvement was noticeable in the quadrupeds after they had been a month in their new quarters.

It was the afternoon of a pleasant day, a fortnight later, that Mrs. Older and Tina had hitched up a team to a light wagon themselves—since the former's husband was busy—and had driven into Ledyard to meet Mrs. Kingsley. They had allowed themselves time to do some necessary trading before the arrival of the train.

As two or three of the stores were entered, Tina became conscious that a man was following and surveying her with ill-concealed admiration. A feeling of embarrassment and vexation came over her, for there was nothing in the appearance of the stranger to arouse any interest from herself.

At the last store in which the two had to stop, the stranger held a whispered conversation with the proprietor for a minute, and with a hesitating air the latter came forward to where the only clerk the establishment afforded was waiting upon the ladies. The stranger had followed, and in a moment was introduced to Mrs. Older and Miss Pennington as Mr. Jay Bentley. Having performed this really distasteful act, the proprietor retired to his former occupation at the rear of the store.

Mrs. Older was too absorbed in her trading to do more than acknowledge the introduction. This, however, was entirely satisfactory to the new acquaintance, and he put forth his best efforts to carry on a conversation with Tina. The latter was worried over the situation, for she instinctively disliked the coarse-featured young man, and was deeply annoyed when he fell in by her side as she started with Mrs. Older for the depot. There, until the train arrived she had to endure the unwelcome presence of the "cheeky nuisance," as she mentally designated the fruit-tree agent.

The sisters-in-law embraced warmly at this first meeting in years, then Mrs. Older presented Tina. Mrs. Kingsley gasped with astonishment, but Tina was better prepared for the meeting, altho a weird feeling came over her that she was gazing at herself as she would appear a score of years later.

"What name did you mention?" asked the startled woman, turning to Mrs. Older.

"Tina Pennington," her sister-in-law repeated.

"Pennington—Pennington," said Mrs. Kingsley, as if trying to recall some forgotten name. "Now I know," she declared, her face clearing. "I remember our neighbors back in Illinois."

"It was our family, but I was a baby then," stated Tina.

"How strange—how strange that I should so meet Susan Pennington's child after all these years, and then see a picture of myself as I was when a girl!" And the woman gazed in wonder at the face of Tina.

"Well, we won't settle the whys and wherefores by standing here," declared Mrs. Older. "Let's get started for home."

As the three walked up the street to where the team was tied, they passed Doctor Donald's office. That young man was standing in the doorway, and he greeted Tina with a smile and bow as she came opposite. Her cheeks flushed with a warm glow, and she involuntarily drew a mental contrast between this person and the individual who had intruded his presence upon her a half-hour before. She had seen the Doctor only at a distance since the eventful day of her father's death, so had had no opportunity for speaking. She knew Mr. Older had settled the bill, but she felt something else was due. She stopped and extended her hand.

"I want to thank you for your kindness to me upon—that day," she finished abruptly, and as the young Doctor looked down into the big dark eyes he saw a dewy moisture begin to gather.

"I wish I could feel that there might be more for you and me to be satisfied about," he said, with intense earnestness.

The utterance was too cryptic for the capacity of her little head, and she was at a loss how to reply. After an interval it came to her that the young man was holding her hand longer than was strictly necessary, and she hastily withdrew it from its clinging environment.

"I must go," she murmured, and as she hurried to overtake the two women, she knew that her cheeks were red and her heart was beating at an accelerated speed. As for the Doctor, he turned back into his office, where he took a seat and gazed in abstraction at nothing for many long minutes.

From every possible angle the remarkable resemblance between Tina and Mrs. Kingsley was discussed at the Older home. The idea was even broached that the Kingsley and Pennington babies were changed, but Mr. and Mrs. Kingsley both declared there were no grounds whatever for entertaining any such a theory. The two families had always been warm friends, and neither family had any known enemy. There was no cause or object for any one to commit such a deed, and in all the years since nothing had been brought to light. It was decided that Nature in one of her inexplicable moods had placed a similar stamp upon the two whose resemblance was of such a striking character. Then the subject was dropped.

A few days later Tina drove into town to obtain supplies needed in the house. Because Mr. Older was so busy, she had volunteered to go, and he well knew that her experience upon the road with her father had taught her to manage a team as well as the average driver. She quickly made her purchases, then walked to a dwelling well to one side of the town, where she had an errand for Mrs. Older. This seen to, she hurried back toward the main street, where her team was tied, and about half the distance had been traversed when she encountered Jay Bentley. She would have passed with a slight bow, but he barred her way.

"I haven't had a chance to talk to you for some time." He spoke thickly, and Tina caught the fumes of liquor from his breath. While not absolutely drunk, he was evidently in a frame of mind bordering upon irresponsibility.

"I haven't time to talk now, as I am in a great hurry." Tina spoke in as pleasant a voice as she could command, and she attempted to pass around the obstacle barring her progress.

"A few minutes will not make any difference—I'm just crazy to have a little confab," and a leering smile spread over the big, coarse features.

A drunken man was always a terror to Tina, and apparently Bentley was in that condition. She turned pale and her limbs trembled.

"I must not stop," she said, and desperately attempted to force her way past him.

His arm flew out and encircled her waist. She would have screamed, but the power to utter a sound deserted her. The nearest house was some distance away, and as she gave a wild glance around she could see no one.

"You ain't so far up in the world you should put on airs," said Bentley, almost in her ear. "I've got plenty of money—lots more than everybody thinks." A low chuckle came as if there was something amusing at the thought. "I can give you as high an old time as anybody, and I want you for my girl to take around."

He wheedled in what he tried to make a pleasant, persuasive tone, and his arm tightened around the girl as she began to struggle to release herself.

"Oh, let me go, please!" she piteously begged.

"Not until you promise to be my little sweetheart." He spoke in a tone meant to be tender and conciliating.

In a frenzy of terror Tina made a desperate effort to break from the encircling arm. She would have accomplished this if Bentley's other arm had not been brought into action. She realized that she was being clasped in a close embrace, and a repulsive face was not far from her own. The thought of those lips touching hers broke the spell that seemed to choke her power of speech, and she uttered a piercing scream.

"Shut up!" her assailant exclaimed, with an oath, and a cruel glitter came into his eyes. "Shut up, I say, or you will wish you had the longest day you live!"

At this instant something shot into his face and the arms about her relaxed. She would have fallen if other arms had not supported her. After a moment of mental confusion, she was conscious that Bentley was lying upon the ground, and it was Doctor Donald's arms which were supporting her.

"You are in no further danger." Tina heard the words, and looked into eyes that were smiling, as it were, into her own.

"Thank you," she murmured simply, unconsciously clinging to the supporting arm of her deliverer, for it seemed such an anchor of safety.

Jay Bentley struggled to his feet and stood irresolute. He knew, as well as every one in Ledyard, that the man who had just delivered such a telling blow was a trained wrestler and boxer, and consequently was entirely capable of taking care of himself. Undoubtedly discretion was the better part of valor, and muttering something about "another time" the discomfited man shuffled off the scene.

"A kind Providence must have sent you to help me, Doctor Donald," said Tina, breathing a sigh of relief.

"Let us think so, for I got in an unaccountable hurry to leave a patient and get back to my office," he stated, with an air of conviction. "I am sorry you had to suffer such an indignity, but I am glad I was the one to put a stop to the affair," he added, with emphatic sincerity.

They were now walking toward the main street where Tina had tied her team, and every step of the way it seemed to her as if the sky grew brighter and the air more exhilarating. Sometimes, when she would shyly glance into the face of her protector, an impulse to snuggle close to him was hard to resist.

It was on the forenoon of this day that Fred Conway received the big check from the insurance company.

As Tina drove back home—for this was what she now called the Older place—she noticed a great cloud overspreading the whole northwestern horizon. Indeed, the sun was obscured when she had completed half of her return trip, and by the time she arrived home the day was growing dark and a broad band of inky blackness showed along the western heavens. A furious storm was evidently at hand, and all the Older household watched the black pall as it rapidly approached the zenith. Just as the storm was about to break, two men rushed up to the dwelling to seek shelter from the coming tempest.

Mr. Older had met one of the men before, and recognized him as Fred Conway. The second man proved to be Percy Howard. By the time introductions all around had been accomplished, the storm drove all into the house.

Because it was at the Conway home that her father had passed away, and because of the tragedy of the fire in the night, Tina observed the bereaved man closely. For some reason she could not analyze she felt no pity for the young widower, and it seemed to her that he was not mourning over his terrible bereavement. He was very talkative, but steered clear of any reference to the fire.

Among other things, he informed the Olders that he had met Percy Howard in another town a few months before and now had the pleasure of meeting him again in Ledyard. As Howard had some idle time, the two were looking over the country with a view of buying land—Howard for an investment, Conway to improve. The latter said he would build a house, when he purchased, and hire some young married couple to occupy it and work for him. In fact, he had been looking at a piece of land about a mile up the road, when the approaching storm had hurried him away. Howard had been along as a sort of adviser.

In the meantime the first fury of the tempest had passed, and it had settled down to a hard, steady rain. Night came on and the downpour continued. The Olders courteously offered shelter for the night to the two men, and they gladly accepted the proffered hospitality. This arrangement could easily be made, for there was a vacant bedroom, since the Kingsleys had taken temporary quarters in a rough building hastily constructed—a method quite common in the settlement of the prairie those days.

During the evening Tina grew conscious of a fact which made her decidedly nervous. Conway was directing admiring eyes at herself much of the time. After the evening meal, he remained in the best room, while she confined herself to the kitchen as much as possible. As for Howard, he seemed to be the embodiment of taciturnity, for he seldom uttered a word. In spite of the dampness, he remained seated out upon the dark porch a good share of the evening.

In the morning the two men left for Ledyard. The sun was shining brightly, but the ground was water-soaked. Conway emphatically declared that he never would take another walk out into the country, for he would immediately purchase a horse and buggy.

Some time during the forenoon Tina went into the chamber which the two men had occupied, intending to act as chambermaid and tidy the room. She had scarcely begun her task when she noticed something just beneath the bed. Stooping, she picked up the object, and saw that she had in her hand an old photograph.

Dumfounded, she gazed with staring eyes and open mouth at her mother's picture.

CHAPTER IV.

A DAY AND A NIGHT.

FOR several minutes Tina gazed at the photograph, pondering over the circumstances by which it came into her hands. She knew of only one such picture in existence, and she had not seen it for several months. She had supposed that her father had it in his keeping, but nothing of the kind had been found among his small belongings. This must be the identical photograph, but much more worn and soiled than when she last had looked upon it, as if it had been carried a considerable time in a coat pocket.

Perhaps, before his death, her father had given Mrs. Conway the picture to hand to her, tho why he should be so interested in this at the time could only be explained by supposing that his state of mind had been such that he placed a peculiar stress upon the old photograph reaching her hands. Mrs. Conway had probably given it to her husband that he might deliver it to Tina, but he had forgotten to do so, and under the circumstances it was not to be wondered at. The piece of cardboard had accidentally fallen from his pocket and remained unnoticed upon the floor.

Breathing easier because she had thus solved a perplexing mystery, Tina was about to take the portrait to her room, when she became conscious of a resemblance in the features upon the card to another face that she tried for some time to call to her remembrance. After pondering a few minutes, it was rather a shock when it came to her that the person she was trying to place in her recollection was Mrs. Conway. There was no remarkable agreement between the two faces, but there was a similarity of expression and lines enough to be noticeable, now that she recalled the woman who had met such a tragic fate.

Tina's mind went back to the day when she had sought aid at the Conway cabin. It must have been that excitement and sorrow had blinded her to what she might have noticed under more favorable circumstances. But, after all, this was simply a coincidence, not half so strange as was the resemblance between herself and Mrs. Kingsley. Thus, after some minutes spent in turning the matter over in her mind, she dismissed the subject and placed the picture among her few effects. Returning to her work, she breathed easier, for there seemed to be something depressing connected with the past quarter of an hour.

The next evening, at the supper table, Older reported that Fred Conway had decided to buy the quarter-section a mile up the road, and that he would start at once to build a house and barn. As soon as possible after the house was completed, a young married couple would be engaged to run the house and farm. In the meantime—so Older stated—Conway planned to secure a boarding-place as close as possible to his purchase, in order to be able to help with the work and look after matters in general. He wished that he might be thus accommodated at the Older home.

Older left the matter to his wife's decision, and rather to be neighborly than for any other reason, the request was granted. Tina felt annoyed at this arrangement, but she had no right to say a word. When Conway became an actual dweller beneath the roof, she was really distressed. To be subjected to the scrutiny of the bold eyes which so persistently sought her out was hard to bear. However, there was no other course open; she was obliged to treat the boarder courteously, but she kept out of his presence as much as possible.

The day following his appearance as a member of the household, the sun had just gone down behind the western horizon when Tina seated herself upon the grass behind the house. She had avoided the front porch, because she knew Conway was there, and great was her disgust when a few minutes later the man she disliked came around the corner of the house.

"I think this is the best way to rest this hot evening," he said, throwing himself down upon the sward a few feet away from where she sat.

Tina's first impulse was to bound to her feet and fly to her room, but the next instant she decided it was a good opportunity to speak of the picture found under the bed.

"I found my mother's old photograph the other morning," she said, hardly knowing how to open the subject.

"You did?" was the reply, but the face was blank as to expression.

"Yes, lying upon the floor of the bedroom. I suppose you dropped it out of your pocket." Still Tina could see no sign of comprehension. "Your wife probably gave it to you some time before—the fire." She spoke with some hesitation, for she felt a delicacy in conversing about the death of her father, and the tragedy of the night so soon following. "I suppose you forgot to send it to me," she went on rapidly, for she wished to convey the impression that she did not condemn him for his thoughtlessness.

"I'm terribly forgetful sometimes," he acknowledged, but his face was still expressionless.

"I've heard that dying people sometimes place great stress upon some really trifling matter, so I suppose Daddy never thought that the picture would be found in his pocket, but gave it to Mrs. Conway to see that I got it all right."

She spoke as if hurried for time, for she was anxious to get thru with the disagreeable subject, yet she wished to show the man that she understood the situation, and that he would not be compelled to talk about his dead wife.

"I am surely the most forgetful man you ever saw!" he ejaculated, and his face cleared as if by magic. "You've explained the situation exactly," he emphatically declared. "So you have the picture?" he asked, and his tone indicated great relief.

"Yes, and as it is the only one I have of my mother I shall always prize it," Tina replied, as she rose to her feet. Having cleared up the subject, she had no further wish to continue the conversation.

Conway also got to his feet, but he kept up such a brisk fire of talk that he held the girl until the darkness of night was nearly upon them. It seemed so hard to get away that she was uncomfortable. At last she saw an opening, as it were, and vanished into the house. Muttering something unintelligible, Conway went back to the front porch.

The next day Tina again volunteered to drive to town and thus save time for Mr. Older upon the farm. She was about to drive off when Conway came hurrying along the road from his quarter-section. He announced that he was also bound for Ledyard, and Tina could do no more than invite him to a seat by her side, altho she bit her lip with vexation.

"I'll have a rig of my own in a few days; then I shall be independent of my neighbors when I want to go anywhere," he gayly declared, as he settled down in the seat.

Soon after starting they passed Doctor Donald with his horse and buggy. Tina did not see the expression upon the young man's face after she had bowed and passed, but it surely was one of keen disappointment.

Conway was a lively conversationalist, Tina was compelled to acknowledge. Before reaching town she almost condemned herself for her antipathy to the man. As she learned that his stay would be short, she invited him to return with her, and he succeeded so well as an entertainer that she did not notice how continually his eyes were upon her. After she had arrived home and he had started on to his farm, she gave a grimace of dissatisfaction as she compared herself to a bird just released from the fascination of a serpent.

An hour after her return, while sweeping off the front porch, Tina saw Doctor Donald come driving back from the direction he had taken. She did not know that the young man's face brightened at sight of her, and he turned his horse to a hitching-post set not far from the dwelling—no fence had yet been built along the road. When Tina saw this, she retreated inside, while her cheeks grew a richer red and her heart accelerated its beating. She had no thought that she was responsible for this visit of the Doctor, but it was pleasant to know he was so near at hand. When he rapped upon the screen door she stammered a greeting as she admitted him, then led him into the best room where Mrs. Older was busy with some sewing.

Perhaps the woman had a keen intuition, for she soon made an excuse to leave the room, and the two young people were alone.

"Do you know what is coming next week?" the Doctor asked Tina.

"No," and she looked wonderingly at him.

"The Fourth of July," he stated, as if announcing a surprising bit of information.

"How stupid of me—I had forgotten," and the girl forced a laugh, but it was a hard matter, for suddenly a premonition came to her, and it seemed as if every nerve in her body was quivering beyond control.

"You probably have heard that Ledyard is going to celebrate." The words came in a matter-of-fact way, but if Tina had not been so absorbed in trying to get control of her own feelings she would have noticed that the voice of the speaker trembled slightly. "I should be delighted if I could have your company that day." The Doctor forced the words out as if in desperation.

Tina had never been asked for her company before—if we except Jay Bentley's distasteful request—and she had often had her daydreams as to how and when the time might come. Now that the actual moment was upon her, it seemed as if the reality was much more than any anticipation she had ever indulged in for the favor was sought by one so much superior to herself in every way, she felt.

"I'll be the proudest girl in Ledyard that day," she exclaimed impulsively. Then, feeling that she had said too much, she shifted her position so that the Doctor might not see her burning cheeks.

The young man himself breathed easier, for it was also a first experience with him.

"And I shall be the proudest man, so we will be grandly matched," he responded gayly, and down in his heart he felt that he spoke the truth.

He remained only a few minutes longer, and out in the kitchen Mrs. Older smiled indulgently when he departed.

Every day Tina became more and more distressed because of the attentions of Conway. When compelled by her duties to be in the same room with him, she knew that his eyes were constantly following her, and when it became unbearable, she would slip away to another part of the house. At evening she found it would not do to be out on the porch, where she could enjoy the cool, fresh air following a hot day, for Conway would take a seat near her. If he meant nothing by his attentions, he was stupid in perception; but an intuition that she could not shake off told her that he did mean something—that he was infatuated to an intense degree. Even if she could have felt that he was a model as to the essentials of manhood, and if there had been no Doctor Donald to occupy her thoughts, she would still have felt disgust at the man for forgetting his wife so soon after her death—and such a death!

If the Olders had sensed the situation Conway would not have been a boarder another day, for their hearts had gone out to the homeless girl, and they would have shielded her as they would a daughter. In after time both admitted that they were stupidly blind, and could only account for their lack of perception by ascribing their failure to being so absorbed in work and plans for improvement upon their new farm.

The "Glorious Fourth" had come, and Ledyard was prepared to celebrate. Flags and bunting streamed from the store fronts and many of the dwellings. At one side of the main street a bowery two hundred feet long and half as wide had been constructed, and as trees were very scarce, the structure was overspread with large sheets of canvas instead of branches with their green leaves. This canvas, by the way, was obtained from the hay men, who used it to cover their half-built stacks in threatening weather, for during those years thousands of acres of "vacant" prairie were gone over by big crews of men and teams, cutting and stacking the natural grass.

The floor of the bowery was covered with rough board seats to accommodate the people during the usual exercises appropriate to the day. This feature over, the floor would be cleared and given up to dancing, two fiddlers composing the orchestra. Along the street boxes were utilized for lemonade counters, while a half-dozen more pretentious "stands" were erected to supply sandwiches, coffee, ice cream and a variety of things liable to be in demand during this exciting day. Ledyard was well equipped to celebrate—and, incidentally, to make a little money.

When Doctor Donald drove up to the Older house he found Tina ready for him. In the purchasing and the making of her outfit she had received the advice and assistance of Mrs. Older, so the young man was thoroly satisfied with what he beheld. Over a white gown was a dark green overdress of lace, and the hat was a wide-brimmed, cream-colored affair made of straw and trimmed simply with green ribbons and rosebuds. Every needed accessory had been provided, and thus art enhanced the attractiveness of a perfect little figure. The dark eyes were glowing and the face flushed with excitement as she stood ready for the arrival of the one of whom she had often dreamed—her first beau. And had she been given her choice from all the world, there was none other she would have chosen in preference to the young Doctor. In truth, tho neither comprehended it, Cupid had shot his arrows.

When the two drove into Ledyard it seemed as if the town had been suddenly transformed. Teams were coming in from every direction, and the main street was swarming with humanity. The small boy was busy everywhere, making a joyous racket with a plentiful supply of firecrackers, while he joined in with yells of delight. Vendors were shouting their wares at the top of their voices, and a brass band from the county seat was blaring away at its loudest selections. With its noise, its crowd and its gala attire, Ledyard was surely making a success of celebrating the Nation's birthday.

The Doctor and Tina spent the day much in the same way as a hundred other young couples. They were on hand at every event of the celebration, and on all sides, the Doctor was pleased to observe, admiring glances were directed at the young lady whom he escorted. But thru all the happy day Tina was conscious at times of glances from the bold eyes of Fred Conway, and at these moments she would tremble slightly with some undefined apprehension. She also realized that another was constantly gazing at her, and when she met the cold, cruel eyes of Jay Bentley a vague terror would fill her soul.

When it grew dark the fireworks were the closing feature of the day. These were "shot off" not far from the church, and with a crowd of others the Doctor and Tina sat upon the broad platform in front of the building to watch the display. Jay Bentley was not far away, really more nervous in his actions than upon the night when he had the surroundings to himself.

After all was over, the crowd dispersed, leaving the young couple alone, save for a dark figure pressed against the side of the building within ordinary earshot. The two could hear the fiddles and the regular tramp of the dancers down at the bowery, but this was no temptation to the Doctor and Tina. They would far rather talk to each other, and in this way the time passed all too quickly.

The Doctor learned how trying was the life Tina had led, and she listened to his account of a life filled also with privations and struggles. His father had died practically bankrupt; then a year afterward his mother had followed her husband to the grave. There were years spent in surmounting obstacles of many kinds; then he had triumphed by graduating at a medical school, afterward starting into practice at Ledyard. His success had been even better than he had hoped, therefore he was thankful to the Almighty.

It was midnight when Doctor Donald thought to strike a match and look at his watch. Down at the bowery the dancing still continued, but this would go on until the eastern sky would begin to herald the approach of day. As the two cared nothing for this pastime, it was time for Tina to return home. They arose and strolled toward the main street, neither being conscious of the prowling figure behind them.

The street was practically deserted, save at the bowery. The stores were getting ready to close, but one merchant was in no hurry, and Tina was left at this place until her escort drove up with his horse. The animal was in its usual stable and the Doctor hurried away in that direction.

Fifteen minutes was as long as the young man expected to be gone, but a half-hour passed and he had not put in an appearance. Tina was beginning to feel nervous, and by another quarter-hour she was decidedly worried. All the stores were closed, and she knew the proprietor of the one in which she waited was ready to also shut his door at her departure. The clerk volunteered to go where the Doctor stabled his horse and see if anything could be learned as to the cause of the delay.

When he returned he reported that there were no signs of the Doctor, and that the horse was standing in the stable, evidently not having been disturbed for the night.

Tina's mind was in a whirl at this intelligence. If the Doctor had received a sudden professional call, this must be from some one in the town, or he would have taken his horse. Before answering this call, why did he not inform her by some method? Could it be possible that he had abandoned her so outrageously? She could not believe this, but she could give no possible solution to the problem so suddenly presented.

She fled from the store, and the proprietor did not trouble himself to try and prevent it. In the chaotic state of her mind she could think of nothing but a desire to be at home. Her experience had been such that she could face a situation other girls of her age would never think of undergoing. In five minutes she was outside the town hurrying toward the Older place.

She did not know whether to be alarmed or angry at the strange behavior of Doctor Donald. As she hastened on, trying to calm her troubled mind, she thought she heard footsteps approaching from behind. Some other belated individual was getting home, she thought, and did not even turn her head.

The next moment an arm was around her waist and a hand over her mouth.

"Now, my little beauty, I've got you good and fast!" she heard a voice mutter in her ear, and she knew she was again in the power of Jay Bentley.

This most interesting story will be continued in the next issue of the Ledger. During the coming months many great stories will appear in these columns. If you are not already a subscriber for this paper, it will repay you to send in a year's subscription. It costs you only $1.00, and you will never regret it. Let us hear from you at once.

* * *

Christmas Shoppers.

"I am going downtown with Mrs. Chummer today, Wilson," remarked Mrs. Beach, "so you need not hurry home, as we shall be late. Mrs. Chummer and I always do our most important Christmas shopping together, and it is so helpful! You see we have no sentiment about these matters, and can be quite sensible. Mrs. Chummer advises me and I advise her about buying presents for all our mutual friends, and it keeps us both from being extravagant. Then to cap the day each of us selects the present that she wishes the other to give her, and so we know what to expect. It is an entirely delightful arrangement."

"You amaze me, Arabella," said Mr. Beach. "Your procedure with Mrs. Chummer is indeed sensible and reflects credit upon your intelligence and hers. But I had thought that the charm of a present, among women, was chiefly in being surprised. Now, if you select your own presents, you will know all about them and so eliminate their chief charm. Or am I at fault, as usual?"

"You are quite right, for once," said Mrs. Beach; "that is, your premise is correct, but your conclusion is wrong. It is true that I select the present that Mrs. Chummer is to give me and she the one I am to give her, but that is only to emphasize the surprise. You see neither of us really gives the other that present—we give it to some one else and buy another for one another. So it works out. Is it not a great plan?"

"I am dizzy, my love. I must get out in the air," said Wilson.

* * *

A self-made man imagines that used up all the really good materi

The Feared Man

Or, Lives at Stake

By Claude H. Gillespie

[Copyright 1916 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

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CHAPTER IX.

TWO days later, the superintendent and a police sergeant entered Black Mask's cell.

"Good morning," said the superintendent.

Black Mask growled his answer.

"I am speaking as the representative of the U. & Y.," said Mr. Curtis. "The company is willing to give you immunity from prosecution for robberies charged against you, on condition that you give me information that will lead to the recovery of all the money that you have taken unlawfully. That will not give you your liberty, of course; as the other is a crime against the State, and your innocence is not yet proved."

"And what are the highly efficient legal methods employed to insult justice?" thundered Black Mask. "The machinery of the law concerns itself but little with evidence after it succeeds in wringing a confession from a cowed and defenseless prisoner.

"The abominable practices of the little rat-men that infest all police departments have been indulged here until they have become torture. During the two nights that I have been held in this inferno of the law, my rest was broken whenever I slept, by some imp of Satan speaking in a stage whisper right at my ear: 'We've got the goods on you, all right! Now tell me about it;' or, 'Your pals have confessed; why don't you?'

"I'll warrant many an innocent but weak man has been the unfortunate victim of the surviving monument of the Spanish Inquisition, known as the third degree of the city jail. If I'm eventually sent down to hell, I fully expect to see the Devil in a policeman's uniform."

"Interference in that connection is, of course, out of my province. I will, however, speak with Lieutenant [illegible] the hope that you may be spared further annoyance.

"Are you now ready to confer with me regarding the transfer of the money?"

"Thanks for your consideration, Mr. Curtis. I'm ready."

In compliance with Black Mask's request, writing materials were brought in.

"This order," he said, handing the superintendent a written sheet, "will give you possession of the money, together with a record of when and from whom acquired. You will note that my name here is George Willis. It is addressed to the proprietor of a storage warehouse in Belle City. The money is contained in an ordinary trunk. There are a number of boxes, but they hold nothing of value, being merely a blind.

"I have an account with a bank there. The bank pays my storage rent yearly, which assures me that the contents of my locker will not be disturbed."

By midnight the second condition of Black Mask's compact with the sheriff was fulfilled—his hoarded hold-up collections were in the hands of the rightful owners.

After the general superintendent's visit to the jail, Black Mask was not harassed by the police department's plain-clothes men. The attendants even showed him unusual courtesies. On the following morning, a newspaper was brought to him.

"You're a sight better off than some railroad presidents," said the attendant, as he passed on.

As Black Mask took the paper, the glaring headlines that stared out at him held his eyes in the grip of their subtle spell:

"ALFRED POWERS, PRESIDENT OF THE U. & Y., A SUICIDE!"

The paper was exhaustive in its details of Mr. Powers' career; his prominence in the railroad world; the multiplicity of interests which he dominated—but the concluding paragraphs stamped his life a failure, and dyed him in the blackest colors.

Black Mask read:

"With all his brilliance, it appears that the man's besetting sin was money. The secret of his suddenly becoming a power in railroad concerns twenty years ago, when he gained control of the U. & Y., is for the first time made public.

"He was the friend and adviser of Jeremiah Beaugh, who then owned the majority of the stock of the U. & Y., but was too feeble-minded to assume the management of its affairs. Mr. Powers was vice-president; but his powers were virtually those of president.

"Mr. Beaugh died suddenly. He was addicted to the use of morphine; and he died alone. No careful investigation was made into the cause of his death, as it was believed that an overdose of the drug had killed him. Mr. Beaugh was an eccentric and did not seek to make friends. He lived with his two servants. At the time of his death, no near relatives could be located, and even his lawyer knew little of his affairs.

"Within a week previous to Mr. Beaugh's demise, practically his entire holdings in the U. & Y. were indorsed over to Mr. Powers. Probably on account of Mr. Powers' association with the road and his known financial strength, the transaction occasioned but little interest, and it appears that no one was sufficiently concerned in Mr. Beaugh to approach the subject to him.

"Mr. Beaugh was known to have a passion for system. One of his private rooms was filled with papers and other records. In one corner was a carefully indexed file of daily newspapers from years back. Among his business papers was found a canceled note, made payable to Mr. Powers, for a very large amount. As the note matured at the time of the transfer of stock, it was taken for granted that stock was given in payment, altho Mr. Powers was never questioned. There was also an envelope bearing an Australian postmark. The letter contained the threat that $50,000 must be sent to a certain Central American address, by a specific date, or the writer would return to the United States. The letter further stated that similar communications would follow. It was signed with three X's. Attached to the letter was an express receipt covering a shipment to the Central American address. This strengthened the current belief that the money borrowed on the note was used for the purpose of complying with the demands of the letter.

"A nephew of Mr. Beaugh, who could not be found at the time of the latter's death, appeared later and made superficial investigations, then disappeared.

"This nephew appeared again late yesterday afternoon, entered Mr. Powers' office unannounced, while a meeting of department heads was in progress, and denounced the note and stock transfers as forgeries and Mr. Powers as the murderer of his uncle. He could, he said, substantiate his accusations, and prove that his uncle died from the effects of a slow poison, and that the poison was administered by Alfred Powers.

"His auditors were spellbound—all save the accused; he alone was calm. Amid the awful silence, Alfred Powers reached into a drawer of his desk, drew out a pistol, then very deliberately blew out his own brains.

"Who the party or parties were who wrote the threatening letter from Australia and to whom the express package was addressed in Central America is still a mystery."

For a long time, Black Mask did not move. He was carried away from his depressing surroundings upon the swirling torrent of his own thoughts. Somehow, self-destruction of a life like Mr. Powers' seemed impossible—terrible. The virile man with whom he was once so intimately associated, whom he respected because of his great abilities, his natural dignity, and uncompromising character—this man of all men was a murderer, and was now lying stiff and soulless—and by his own hand. And this man was the father of Alice Powers!

Was self-destruction an outward evidence of inward weakness, he asked himself; or was it an act of great courage? Brave men dared to die; cowards were afraid. Deliberately to plunge one's own soul—a blood-stained soul—into eternity was appalling; an extremity from which he shuddered.

Then his past became a part of his vision and mocked him. It was tainted with revenge. Revenge was a boomerang; it had returned to him. The State sought to avenge the murder of one of its citizens and accused him of being an accessory. He could not disprove the evidence against him, nor could he enlist public opinion in his favor by his unsupported word alone. He had staked his freedom upon the capture and testimony of Boles. Now doubt assailed him. Boles hated him and was remorseless. If Boles testified that they were partners in crime, he was lost.

Of Alice, he could learn nothing. He could only wait; and waiting was torture.

His mental turmoil was at its height when two officers entered his cell.

"Gotta go before the big bench," said one of them. "Something doing, I guess."

CHAPTER X.

BLACK MASK wondered when he found Mr. Curtis awaiting him in the little bare courtroom. That gentleman greeted him with a nod and a smile—a very unusual procedure.

The judge, a pompous individual, was acutely conscious of the dignity of the law, and held his personal worth and the responsibilities of his position in grave esteem.

He asked a number of formal questions; then, in his most solemn court tone, addressed the prisoner:

"James Moyes, by authority of the sworn confession of one Milton Boles, together with other certified evidence now in my possession, you are legally absolved from criminal implication in the murder of Joseph Hawley of Livingston Junction. There being no other crimes charged against you, the privileges of citizenship are legally restored to you. Officers, release your prisoner."

The dim consciousness that he was at last a free man, that his life was now his own to rebuild those wasted years, to Black Mask appeared to be a far-away mental mirage; and it seemed the shock of awakening must come. He vaguely felt that he should thank the judge, but he could only bow.

The two officers stepped aside, and Mr. Curtis came forward and grasped his hand.

"I want to be first," he said, "to express satisfaction that your liberty is secure, and that this affair has ended the way I had hoped. Sheriff Williams has acquainted me with your story, and I believe in you."

"Thank you, Mr. Curtis. The fact that anybody ventures so far as to express faith in me now assures me of the reality of things and gives me the moral courage to face the future."

While Black Mask was speaking, Mr. Curtis led him to the side of the room. As his glance swept the courtroom, Black Mask wondered at the presence of the lone woman in black, near the door.

"May I ask what plans, if any, you have for the future?"

Black Mask smiled.

"Events are moving too rapidly to encourage the making of plans."

"Then, perhaps, I can be of some slight assistance to you. The death of Mr. Powers will not materially affect the policies or management of his enterprises. For some time, the advisability of joining the R & R. and the K. & K. by a connecting line has been under contemplation. The project is now certain to go thru. This means bringing a part of the Rockies into subjection and breaking thru the Utes' country, and calls for real engineering and real fighting. The men who lay the grade must know how to shoot as well as survey. Does such an undertaking appeal to you?"

Black Mask was silent for a full minute.

"I was under heavy obligations to you, Mr. Curtis," he answered slowly; "and my burden of indebtedness is now materially increased. Much as I would like to concur with your wishes and deeply as I appreciate your unusual consideration, I do not feel that I have the courage to stay in a country where I shall be under constant apprehension of contact with people who know my past. I am too sensitive and too passionate to sustain a record like mine. I might lose control of myself if some luckless man should fling my past in my face. No man could do that and live. It may be weakness, but I do not feel safe here. I fear myself, my passionate nature. My own acts made me a one-time hunted animal; I want to take all precautions against repeating the experience. I am legally free; but society exacts another penalty. Men are justly suspicious of ex-criminals; but to know that I was being deliberately shunned would bring all my restrained brute nature to the surface. In a country where my black fame has not reached, I may build a new and a clean life."

Mr. Curtis had evidentally hoped for a different answer.

"Of course, you are a free agent," he said, after a pause, "and, then, you might be right. If you would be interested in a project in Brazil, I may be able to put you in touch with something. No; don't thank me. I feel I owe you this.

"A young lady is waiting for you. I find her very interesting—perhaps you will. You won't need an introduction."

Mr. Curtis left him, and Black Mask turned and found the girl in black had risen and was coming toward him. It was Alice Powers.

As Black Mask towered above the trim little person before him, she was deliciously conscious that he was crushing her hand in a grip that was more than friendly. Her presence now aroused into throbbing life the hope that was killed in his breast six years ago among the shrubbery on her father's lawn.

Black Mask noted that the girlish form he remembered had given place to the fuller curves of womanhood; that the frank oval face was, perhaps, more thoughtful; that in the blue glory of her wonderful eyes was their old pert trick of "looking" questions—of challenging the truthfulness of men and things; and he sensed in her easy bearing an I-can-take-care-of-myself poise. He was pleased with his discoveries, and decided that she was a delightful blending of girl and woman. He, she told herself, was too big and too solid to change.

"This is almost too severe a test for my credulity," he said.

"Why can't you be polite and tell me how glad you are to see me?"

"My English would break down," he answered with a smile.

They sat down on one of the hard, bare benches.

"I know about your father, Alice," he said gently. "Please be assured of the

WHAT THE DOCTOR KNOWS.

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"There's a Reason"

depth and fullness of my sympathy."

"I can feel it," she answered. "I cannot grasp it yet; it seems so hideous and unnecessary. The services are day after tomorrow. I am on my way to what was once my home. I knew you were too proud to come to me, even if you knew where to find me, so I came here first."

"Bless you!" he said.

"Jim, I dread to go back alone and meet those people. Won't you go with me to the funeral?"

"For you—yes," he answered slowly.

"Thank you. I know what it cost you to say that; but it will be so much easier if I can have you to do things for me again."

"Tell me, Alice, why have you stayed away from home all these years?"

"How did you know?"

"I'll tell you the whole story, but not now."

"After mother's death I had greater influence with Dad than any one else. Oh, if I had stayed with him! All this, in some way, might have been avoided.

"I noticed he was different immediately after Milton Boles came. He seemed to be worried—to fear something. When he encouraged me to receive that man's attentions, I felt I was being offered as a sacrifice to appease Boles. I submitted to his assumption of ownership in the hope that I might learn their secret and form some plan to save Dad.

"Boles once attempted to kiss me. I sprang out of his arms as I would from the coils of a rattler. I threatened to report his conduct to Dad. I could have bitten my tongue out after I said it. He sneeringly said that he knew that Dad was depending a lot upon my influence—that I might make myself very valuable to my father that way, if I chose. He added that he was valuable to Dad, too, by keeping silent. That convinced me that my suspicions were correct—that Boles held Dad in dread of some awful disclosures. Of course, I believed that my father was an innocent victim. Then I made my first great mistake; I sent you away."

"But, Alice, you were——"

"Be nice, please; do not interrupt. I did send you away. Forgive me if I had no faith in you then. The evidence that I overheard was so convincing that my judgment condemned you, while my heart—my—my woman's intuition made you a victim of villainy. Later, when I could calmly recall all the circumstances, I remembered that both Dad and Boles spoke unnecessarily loud. Dad never mentioned your leaving afterward. Boles did and exulted over it. This led me to suspect that the conversation I had listened to was merely a piece of acting intended for my ears—and planned by Boles.

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Free Trial Coupon 4

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"After that I became a constant eavesdropper. It was not ladylike, I know; but it was my only weapon. One day my chance came: Dad and Boles were having words. Boles lashed him with terrible accusations. Poor Dad cringed and begged—said they needed each other—always had. I fled as I would from an epidemic. Slowly, the awful facts lit up my blurred understanding—that I had lived, had been educated—that everything I had was purchased with money that was stained with blood.

"That night I ran away. I had but one blind impulse—to get away from home as far as my slim purse could carry me. When I had to face the hard fact that I had to work for my living, I turned to the only thing that I felt I could do—telegraphing. The click of the sounder was a mystic, fairy tongue to me when I was a child. I spent a great deal of time at the dispatcher's office and bothered him lots, I know. My favorite toy was the outfit he rigged up for me to take home. I never wholly forsook it, and in time became quite skilful, little thinking that I should one day depend upon it for my bread.

"I was placed at a little station in the Black Gorge country. I was terribly homesick at first, but I was safe. I took a new name, and none of my friends would come there. For that reason I refused to be transferred.

"When the name of Black Mask began to fill the West, somehow, I secretly associated his exploits with you—you both seemed so big and unusual. Some of the mean little jobs I blamed to Boles. It was imagination, of course, but how accurate.

"Last Monday night, when I was on my way home from the station, things began to happen. It was then that Boles made me a professional call. He was anxious about the whereabouts of an express of thirty thousand. He arranged a cute little system of signals with me, so that there would be no mix in my running orders. I couldn't do justice to my landlady's very excellent dinner that evening; I was indulging in the rather unusual pastime of thinking.

"His story was believable, and would have deceived an unsophisticated society girl; but I was a Western girl, and that made a difference. He claimed the distinction of being the representative of some king of bandits, who held him under constant guard; but I could not believe that it was customary for them to decorate their prisoners with guns. It was plain that he was at the end of his resources, or he would never have given his game away and depended upon my sympathy and fear to force me to play into his hand. I knew I would feel safer with a sheriff and a few able men out in the woods, so I slipped over to the station that night and succeeded in getting a message thru. Boles and his two men were unsuspecting and fell into the sheriff's trap.

"When I confronted Boles at the hearing, he went to pieces completely. He wept and raved in turn. I pitied him, but I could not help despising him for his weakness. I like to think of men as being strong. When he became composed he bared his whole life. I'd hate to have on my soul what he has on his.

"He confessed his part in poor Dad's awful crime. It was his planning. He wrote the letter from Australia—the one which was found in Mr. Beaugh's papers; he also received the express package that was sent to Central America. It contained no money. Both were necessary parts of the general scheme. He forged Mr. Beaugh's signature to the note and the stock transfers. He provided the drug that caused Mr. Beaugh's death, and instructed Dad how to use it. After that Boles had Dad wholly in his power.

"I followed the papers closely and was familiar with the details of your capture and imprisonment. When Boles confessed to the killing of the station-agent, I knew your release was certain. I was fearful that I would be too late to tell you that I know now what a terrible wrong I did you six years ago when I made you desperate by my want of faith in you, and so helped to make you the most feared man in the West."

"Alice, knowing my history during those six years, can you be so generous as not to despise me utterly, as I deserve?"

"Crime—the greatest of crimes—is too closely associated with my life to permit me to hold false pride in such a sense. And you have made restitution."

She leaned toward him and touched his arm.

"Jim, we've made a mess of our lives. What are you going to do with what is left of yours? And how are you going to begin?"

"Mr. Curtis has offered his influence to secure me a foothold in Brazil. I should like to begin my new life in a new country."

He paused as he studied her face. "Alice, will you go with me?" he asked softly.

His eyes held hers by their fierce earnestness. In their depths of changeable blackness broke a new light—in the eyes she had once seen steel cold and flashing with wild hate.

"Is it unmaidenly to be truthful?" she asked. "I hoped for such an invitation," and she became intent upon drawing imaginary figures upon the bare floor with the point of her umbrella.

"It is fair that you should know that I am not the little parlor miss you once knew. I should be out of place in the old life now. I can shoot and ride and am no longer shocked when I hear men talk man language, even when they swear. I have been independent, and I like it. I shall need a lot of taming.

"Altho my father was wealthy, I am practically penniless. I just learned that the foundation of his fortune was laid with money that was rightfully his brother's. I cannot accept a penny. I owe it to poor father to make reparation in his name for wrongs which he cannot now make right."

Suddenly, her eyes met his, searchingly. "Jim, do you really want me—now?"

"It's going to be easy," he said, "the thing the sheriff asked me to do—to live straight."

And as they stepped out upon the narrow street, the great white sun dropped his warm rays down upon a new earth—a world made over by love and hope.

The End.

* * *

Surprising Them.

"I never want to know what people are going to give me for Christmas," observed the landlady at the Budd boarding house. "So, whatever you people are going to give me, I want it kept secret."

"We wouldn't tell for anything," simpered the boarder in arrears.

"The trouble is," suggested the professor, "that when you don't let it become generally known what you are giving there is always considerable danger of the presents being duplicated."

"Especially if it comes from the five and ten cent store," added the very young boarder. "But, if you do let other people know what you are giving, the secret is sure to be whispered to the party to be surprised sooner or later."

"It is almost impossible to surprise any one anyway," said the pretty teacher. "When I was little at home we used to try to surprise each other, but we never succeeded. When one of the family would come home from downtown and lock herself up in her room immediately with a great banging of closet doors and locking of bureau drawers we would know that presents were being hidden, and we would straightway put the guilty member under a severe cross-examination.

"'Did you buy some presents today?'

"'Yes.'

"'Is it a book?'

"'No, it's not a book.'

"'Is it dress material, or has it anything to do with dresses?'

"'No, it hasn't.'

"'Well, has it anything to do with fancy work? I'd like to have a nice sewing set, so if you're going to give me anything it may as well be that.'

"'Well, I'm not going to tell you what it is, so there.'"

"In our home," narrated the pink-cheeked young man, "our parents would come home around Christmas with bundles which they would elaborately hide. We always knew where the things were hid. It would be either in a wardrobe or in the garret or in the basement. Then when pa and ma went downtown to add to the stock we'd hunt up the keys and see for ourselves. Often we'd get them out and play with them, and once I was so unfortunate as to wreck a couple of my toys long before Christmas morning.

"That was bad business, for when ma would say: 'Very well, then, if you are going to act that way there will be no tiddledy-winks game for you this Christmas!' I wouldn't be able to show the proper concern, knowing that I had lost most of the tiddledys already."

* * *

Awful Suspicion.

Tripping daintily along the crowded thorofare, Edythe Dill suddenly hesitated, faltered, stopped and held a hand up to her heart.

"My Heavens!" she thought. "Heavens! My!"

Her beautiful topaz eyes grew wide with fear, and her little hand, still over her heart, could feel its beating increase from its average of 145 a minute to 233.

"Oh, if what I fear is true, is true!" she breathed.

She caught her breath sharply, and let it go again.

All around her, Christmas shoppers, thousands of them, with joy in their eyes and roses in their cheeks and pains in their feet and useless presents under their arms, surged and eddied.

"A good surge, Eddie!" cried one gayly.

Suddenly she took her courage in her hands.

"I must look!" she moaned.

She whirled about and looked into the mirror of a chewing gum slot machine. It was true. The poor girl, without a speck of powder on her nose, dropped, an inert senseless heap, to the pavement.

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The Silken Signal.

(Continued From Page 3.)

the eyes in the soiled face opened, widened wildly; the figure began to twist and struggle.

"Stop her! Hold Number 2!" the muddy lips cried.

"Shut her off, McBinn! Plug her! Throw her over—throw her over! Give her——"

"There—there!" said Addicks, stroking the young fellow's hair back from his forehead; "Number 2 is all right. McBinn is here. I was at the throttle myself and got your signal. Number Two is right here on the track."

Wadd looked around at the men oddly, up at the front of Number 2's engine, then sank back limply and began to laugh. "Ho-o-rah!" he said weakly; "pick the hymn and I'll sing the tenor part! Say, be careful, one of my legs is busted, I guess. Touch her lightly, please. Say, I had to burn Daffy's dress; couldn't help it. She simply won't do a thing to me!" The young fellow set his jaws rigidly as the men began to lift him.

"Dress—Daffy's dress!" said Addicks. "Where did you get—what do you mean, boy?"

"Weddin'-gown," muttered Wadd thru his teeth.

"You set it on fire?"

"Burned her up," grated Wadd.

The master mechanic was silent a moment.

"I see," he said. "Well, I'll buy her the next one myself. Another thing, son, when the 1202 has been put thru the shop you can have her."

"The engine or the girl?"

"Both."

This story is from the pen of the author of two books of railroad stories that we heartily recommend to Ledger readers. One of the books is "The Diamond Key, and the Railroad Heroes Who Won It." The other book is "Young Heroes of Wire and Rail." These books recount many thrilling and extraordinary acts of heroism by telegraph operators and train dispatchers and engineers and conductors. If you like to read exciting railroad stories you ought to send *for* both of these splendid books. They are beautifully bound and finely illustrated, and each book contains nearly 400 pages of matter that will make you sit up and take notice. If you wish to make a Christmas present to any one, or would like yourself to be wonderfully entertained, you should send for one or both of these books. "Young Heroes of Wire and Rail" is $1.00. "The Diamond Key, and the Railroad Heroes Who Won It," $1.50. Address Lee & Shepard, Publishers, 93 Federal street, Boston, Mass.

* * *

RUBAIYAT OF CHRISTMAS GIVING.

Awake! for Christmas tide has cast a blight
O'er many a brain and put good sense to flight.
And lo! the maid or matron who is caught
In bargain crushes will emerge a fright.

Dreaming, I stood and watched the human jam:
A shriek arose! A slap! A shocked "Oh, ma'am!"
Then staggered from the mass in disarray
A woman, muttering, "What a fool I am!"

Then, as I watched them, those who stood before
The counter rushed the elevator door
And, knowing from experience what was best,
I quick departed and returned no more.

Alike for those who many gifts prepare
And those who never give the day a care
A muezzin from the realms of space proclaims:
"Ye silly ones, 'tis neither here nor there!"

The Christmas gifts we set our hearts upon
Are often "seconds" only and anon,
Like snow upon a city's dirty streets,
Lasting a little hour or two, are gone!

The madness deepens! E'en a suffragette
Forgets her "mission" as she strives to get
A cut-glass punch bowl for a dollar bill
Or sherbet glasses at one-ten the set.

Oh, fill the mail! What boots it to repeat
How the brave postman, staggering to his feet,
Again is crushed to earth and yet again—
Why fret about him if your gifts be "sweet?"

And the wan shop girl who, amidst the fray,
Faints at her task—why fret about her, pray?
There's always some one who can take her place;
Let's all be merry! Soon 'tis Christmas day!

* * *

Adam's Christmas Eve.

I do not have to tell you that to a happily married man the proper exercise of the true Christian spirit consists largely in giving your wife for Christmas the things she wants most and having her give you the things she wants ext to most. With scarcely a break e arrangement has come down to us arried men from the Garden of Eden. Maybe Christmas wasn't organized n, but woman was, and once a woman always a woman. I am indulging in cheap punnery when I refer to the her of our race as the First Christ- Eve—the three words just seem to n, that's all.

picture the scene: It is nightfall of ember twenty-fourth, in the year M. The lion and the lamb lie down rest together. The time is about to e when should these two lie down ther only the lion will get up in the ning, the lamb remaining down unthoroly digested. But now the first vegetarianism epidemic is in vogue and there are no meat eaters.

Our original grandparents also seek repose upon the grassy lea. It is by deliberate intent that the lady in the case has lured her guileless helpmate to a spot where the heaviest laden apple tree in the orchard—and the only one in the entire collection bearing a sign reading, "All Persons Are Prohibited From Picking Fruit Off This Tree"—spreads its sheltering boughs.

There is a purpose in the woman's seeming fancy. She knows exactly what she is about. But Adam, the poor slob, suspects nothing. This is the first woman he has ever met. He is, as the saying goes, easy. He prepares to stretch himself beneath the leafy canopy. He aims to drift right off to sleep. He has put in a hard day, loafing round and killing time. Work hasn't been created into the world yet, and the poor, bored wretch is all fagged out from doing nothing. Eve speaks.

"Adam," she says, "tomorrow will be Christmas in the Garden. Let us hang up our fig leaves—Santa Claus might bring us something."

"Where do you get that Santa Claus stuff?" responds Adam, not unkindly, mind you, but in a spirit of gentle raillery. "I'm a grown man," says Adam.

"Are you, really?" she asks. There is a hidden meaning in her bantering reply, but it goes over his head. "Anyhow, dearie, let's hang up our fig leaves—there can't be any harm in it. Just to humor me, now—please!"

"Oh, very well," he says, just as every subsequent husband has said under similar conditions a thousand times.

"Oh, very well, have your own way. But I'm willing to risk a couple of the best city lots in this restricted residential district if I can put my hand on the party who's been handing you that Santa Claus yarn, and not have to travel more than a quarter of a mile to do it, either. I saw him talking with you yesterday while I was trying to teach the two Potomac shad how to swim.

"Eve, thank goodness I'm not jealous, and far be it from me to interfere with your friendships round the neighborhood—I guess things do get pretty lonely for you, hanging about the place all day—but if I were you I wouldn't waste much time in the company of that snake. He's the worst he-gossip in Eden County. I don't like his eye, either. He'd make trouble for anybody in a holy minute if he got the chance, or I miss my guess."

Husbandlike, tho, he follows her example and hangs up his fig leaf alongside of hers, upon the face of a nearby rock where a cleft in the cliff suggests a fireplace. Two minutes later he is snoring to beat the walrus, asleep in the next glade. But does the lady drop right off too? She does not. She lies down all right, after looking under the edge of the mossy bank for burglars, but she doesn't stay there.

As soon as everything is nice and quiet, up she gets. Stealthily she plucks an apple from the forbidden tree and stealthily she slips it down inside of Adam's fig leaf. After that she can hardly wait thru the night for daylight to appear. When the first pink rays of the sunlight come stealing athwart the sward she is sitting up and poking Adam in the ribs.

"Oh, dearie," she cries in well-simulated surprise, "see what Santa has brought us—a lovely red apple."

And Adam falls for the deception. It is the original fall of man. Personally he doesn't care much for apples. Offhand he can think of a dozen things he likes better for breakfast. But, manlike, he humors her. He takes one bite, and then she snatches the apple away from him and eats all of it—slowly and distinctly.

You see it now, don't you—the true inwardness of the Christmas gift-giving habit as between married couples? She has gone thru the form of giving him for Christmas the very thing that she has been wanting for herself all along. Her daughters have been playing the same game ever since. They are still playing it.

* * *

TO THE FIR TREE.

(From the German.)

Oh, fir tree green! Oh, fir tree green!
Your leaves are constant ever,
Not only in the summer time,
But thru the winter's snow and rime
You're fresh and green forever.

Oh, fir tree green! Oh, fir tree green!
I still shall love you dearly!
How oft to me on Christmas night
Your laden boughs have brought delight.
Oh, fir tree green! Oh, fir tree green!
I still shall love you dearly.

* * *

Didn't Like It.

A school inspector, testing a class in fractions, asked a boy, whether given his choice, he would prefer one-sixth or one-seventh of an orange. The boy promptly replied that he would prefer one-seventh. The inspector more promptly explained that such action would be foolish, because, tho the suggested fraction might seem the larger, just the reverse was true.

"I know, sir," said the boy, "that's why I chose it. I don't like oranges."

City Physicians Explain Why They Prescribe Nuxated Iron

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New York, N. Y.—It is conservatively estimated that over five million people daily in this country alone are taking Nuxated Iron. Such astonishing results have been reported from its use both by doctors and laymen, that a number of physicians in various parts of the country have been asked to explain why they prescribe it so extensively, and why it apparently produces so much better results than were obtained from the old forms of inorganic iron.

Extracts from some of the letters received are given below:

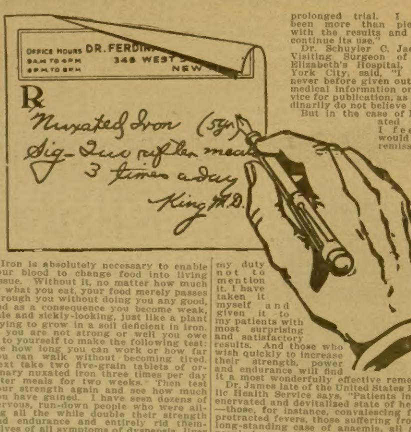
Dr. King, a New York physician and author says: "There can be no vigorous iron men without iron. Pallor means anaemia. Anaemia means iron deficiency. The skin of anaemic men and women is pale. The flesh flabby. The muscles lack tone, the brain fags and the memory fails and they often become weak, nervous, irritable, despondent and melancholy. When the iron goes from the blood of women, the roses go from their cheeks.

In the most common foods of America, the starches, sugars, table syrups, candies, polished rice, white bread, soda crackers, biscuits, macaroni, spaghetti, tapioca, sago, farina, degerminated cornmeal, no longer is iron to be found. Refining processes have removed the iron of Mother Earth from these impoverished foods, and silly methods of home cookery, by throwing down the waste-pipe the water in which our vegetables are cooked is responsible for another grave iron loss.

Therefore, if you wish to preserve your youthful vim and vigor to a ripe age, you must supply the iron deficiency in your food by using some form of organic iron just as you would use salt when your food has not enough salt.

Dr. Sauer, a Boston physician who has studied widely in both this country and in prominent European Medical Institutions says: "As I have said a hundred times over, organic iron is the greatest of all strength builders. If people would only throw away patent medicines and nauseous concoctions and take simple Nuxated Iron, I am convinced that the lives of thousands of persons might be saved who now die every year from pneumonia, grippe, consumption, kidney, liver and heart troubles, etc. The real and true cause which started their diseases was nothing more nor less than a weakened condition brought on by lack of iron in the blood."

Not long ago a man came to me who was nearly half a century old and asked me to give him a preliminary examination for life insurance. I was astonished to find him with a blood pressure of a boy of 20 and as full of vigor, vim and vitality as a young man; in fact a young man he really was notwithstanding his age. The secret, he said, was taking iron—nuxated iron had filled him with renewed life. At 30 he was in bad health; at 46 he was careworn and nearly all in—now at 50, a miracle of vitality and his face beaming with the buoyancy of youth



Iron is absolutely necessary to enable your blood to change food into living tissue. Without it, no matter how much or what you eat, your food merely passes through you without doing you any good, and as a consequence you become weak, pale and sickly-looking, just like a plant trying to grow in a soil deficient in iron. If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: see how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary nuxated iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. I have seen dozens of nervous, run-down people who were ailing all the while double their strength and endurance and entirely rid themselves of all symptoms of dyspepsia, liver and other troubles in from ten to fourteen days' time simply by taking iron in the proper form. And this after they had in some cases been doctoring for months without obtaining any benefit. But don't take the old forms of reduced iron, iron acetate or tincture of iron simply to save a few cents. The iron demanded by Mother Nature for the red coloring matter in the blood of her children is, alas! not that kind of iron. You must take iron in a form that can be easily absorbed and assimilated to do you any good, otherwise it may prove worse than useless. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance and filled his blood with iron before he went into the affray; while many another has gone down in inglorious defeat simply for the lack of iron."

Dr. V. Von Unruh, Medical Director in Chief of the New York City Clinic said, "I have given Nuxated Iron a fair and prolonged trial. I have been more than pleased with the results and will continue its use."

Dr. Schuyler C. Jaques, Visiting Surgeon of St. Elizabeth's Hospital, New York City, said, "I have never before given out any medical information or advice for publication, as I ordinarily do not believe in it. But in the case of Nuxated Iron I feel I would be remiss in my duty not to mention it. I have taken it myself and given it to my patients with most surprising and satisfactory results. And those who wish quickly to increase their strength, power and endurance will find it a most wonderfully effective remedy."

Dr. James late of the United States Public Health Service says, "Patients in an enervated and devitalized state of health—those, for instance, convalescing from protracted fevers, those suffering from a long-standing case of anaemia, all such people in my opinion, need iron. Of late, there has been brought to my attention, Nuxated Iron. In practice, I have found this an ideal restorative and upbuilding agent in these cases above mentioned."

NOTE—Nuxated Iron which is prescribed and recommended above by physicians in such a great variety of cases is not a patent medicine nor secret remedy, but one which is well known to druggists and whose iron constituents are widely prescribed by eminent physicians everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products, it is easily assimilated, does not injure the teeth, make them black nor upset the stomach; on the contrary, it is a most potent remedy in nearly all forms of indigestion, as well as for nervous rundown conditions. The manufacturers have such great confidence in Nuxated Iron that they offer to forfeit $100.00 to any charitable institution if they cannot take any man or woman under 60 who lacks iron and increase their strength 200 per cent. or over in four weeks' time provided they have no serious organic trouble. They also offer to refund your money if it does not at least double your strength and endurance in ten days' time. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

THE SMUGGLER

Or, WE THREE GIRLS

By Ella Middleton Tybout

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CHAPTER X.

IF THERE are any who, like Mrs. Graham, dislike salt air and object to the constant intrusion of the ocean, this narrative will not interest them.

Looking back upon it now, it seems to me that everything we did that summer, indeed almost everything we thought and said, was in some way connected with the sea. And perhaps this is not so strange after all, since we looked out upon it from every window and its murmur was never absent from our ears.

It was Gabrielle who originated the plan of a supper on the rocks. Gabrielle was great in originating, but we used to tell her she liked to watch other people carry out her ideas. She sat in the hammock and urged her project, while her hair blew about her ears and her book slipped unnoticed from her lap.

"We will ask the Campbells to join us," she said, "and Mr. Bennett and Mr. Blake, of course."

"And the Grahams," I added.

"If you like," the tone was not enthusiastic; "I must say she gets on my nerves, she is so mysterious."

Gabrielle dislikes secrets unless she happens to be a party to them. She now returned to the subject with renewed vigor.

"It is full moon, you know. Think of the water dashing over the rocks, and the fire we'll make out of driftwood."

"Spoons, forks, and napkins for all those people," ruminated Elizabeth,, "to say nothing of things to eat. It will be a lot of trouble."

"No trouble at all. Just get Mary Anne to put some things in baskets. In fact," Gabrielle paused a moment before breaking the news, "I have already asked Mr. Bennett; I met him in the village when I went for the mail, and it suddenly occurred to me it would be nice to do this tonight."

Of course, after this startling disclosure it was impossible to demur further, and Elizabeth rose to the occasion.

"It is all very well for you to laugh," she remarked, "but you don't even know whether there is as much as a cracker in the house. I'll have to go to the village and see what I can find."

I really sympathized with Elizabeth and tried to show it in a practical manner.

"Suppose I do the marketing. I love poking around in those queer little shops."

"You'd buy whatever they told you," she returned, ungratefully, "and probably come home with a leg of mutton and a head of cabbage for a picnic supper. No—I'll send Mary Anne; that will be best of all."

Mary Anne, as usual, came nobly to the rescue.

"It's not the first supper I've spread on the rocks," she said, "and most likely it won't be the last. So rest easy, Miss Elizabeth, fur well I know how to purvide, and there's nothin' to werrit yerself over at all. Tho why folks should want to do sich things when they might set up at a table and eat like Christians, I can't fur the life of me make out."

Gabrielle repeated this speech as we sat around the fire that night and watched the waves break against the rocks, sending up little fountains of foam that sparkled in the moonlight. Her hands were clasped about her knees, and her hair glistened here and there where the spray had touched it.

"Of course," said Lord Wilfrid, "one could not expect the lower classes to understand the subtle fascination of an evening like this."

"Wilfrid knows so little of the lower classes," interposed Lady Edith; "wouldn't it be better, dear, to give them the benefit of a doubt? They may enjoy the beauties of nature in their way, you know, altho it is of course quite different from yours."

It was a very innocent little speech, laughingly uttered, yet Lord Wilfrid's face darkened disagreeably and he pulled his cap down over his eyes in a manner distinctly irritable. Evidently he brooked no criticism, however slight, and I wondered whether this was the effect of his illness or his natural disposition. His sister looked at him a moment, then turned to Elizabeth with a perfunctory remark about the beauty of the night. She never noticed his sulky moods, altho they occurred quite often, and was always ready to respond with a smile or a cheerful word when he deigned to be pleasant again.

Elizabeth laid her hand on Lady Edith's with a caressing gesture. She said afterward that she was glad she had done it, for at the moment she quite hated Lord Wilfrid, and knew from the way his sister's hand clasped hers that she needed sympathy.

They sat together upon a large flat rock with their backs against a higher bowlder, while Mr. Blake and Mr. Graham sat at their feet, feeding the fire with bits of driftwood and casting appreciative glances at the picture just above them.

I thought Mr. Blake looked as tho he envied Elizabeth, and would have been quite willing to be sympathetic himself. I could not see Mr. Graham so distinctly, for his face was in the shadow, so I leaned forward a little that I might get a better view. As I did so I noticed that Mrs. Graham also was looking toward him and beyond him to the sea, her dark eyes widely opened and her lips slightly parted.

The fresh salt air had brought no touch of color to her face, which seemed even paler than usual in the white light, as I followed the direction of her gaze, past the blazing fire, over the rocks, and out where the ocean stretched undulating into space. A broad silver path was spread directly opposite us, quivering with the incoming tide and sparkling here and there where the billows broke into little white-capped waves.

"It is lovely, isn't it?" I said, thinking I understood her abstraction.

She turned toward me with a quick, nervous movement.

"I beg your pardon, I'm afraid my thoughts were wandering."

I repeated my remark with the inane feeling such repetitions cause, and she replied with a repressed vehemence which the subject scarcely seemed to warrant.

"Lovely? Oh, no—not to me! Look beyond the little path of light to the interminable darkness, and think what lies beneath."

"Don't think," interposed Mr. Graham, with his light laugh, "and don't look too far. There is where Mrs. Graham and I differ. She is always looking into and beyond—tho she's awfully afraid of what she may discover. As for me, I prefer not to go below the surface; I'd much rather float on those jolly little waves, for instance, than dive beneath them."

"And I," said Elizabeth, "would rather sit here and watch them than do either."

"I'm afraid you are not ambitious, Miss Elizabeth," said Mr. Bennett; "one must dive a bit if one considers the future."

"Who cares for the future?" interrupted Mr. Graham; "it is the present we live in, isn't it? The past is gone and not worth worrying about; the future will look out for itself; but the present—where we live and breathe, love and hate! Ah, that's the time for me and I think I make the most of it. No one can accuse me of crying over spilt milk, or taking undue thought for the morrow, eh, Juliet?"

"No," she returned; "no, Harry."

She spoke dully and immediately lapsed into silence in a manner that provoked me. Mr. Graham frequently made such little jocular appeals to his wife, and always endeavored to include her in any merriment, or general conversation that interested him. I thought she should respond, sometimes at least, and could understand what Gabrielle meant when she said she often had to resist an inclination suddenly to shake Mrs. Graham and see if she would then be roused from her usual apathetic indifference.

We continued to talk for a while in a desultory way, but as the moments passed we lapsed into silence and watched the water dash noisily over the rocks, for the surf was wonderfully fine that night. So we sat around our fire, looking out upon the restless moonlit ocean and listening to the roar of the breakers as wave followed wave in quick succession, each thinking our own thoughts and no doubt carried by them beyond the distant horizon of our most cherished hopes and ambitions.

Of course I cannot answer for the others, but I know that I was at first oppressed by a sense of my own insignificance and then blissfully happy, content with the present moment, and oblivious to the flight of time.

As I sat dreaming dreams so vague that they had no individuality but merged one into the other like mist into clouds, a little boat glided silently into the silver path. It came out of the darkness into the light with spread sails that glistened pearly white, and as it floated on the sparkling water it seemed to me a phantom ship upon an enchanted ocean. I watched it entranced, wishing I knew its destination and whence it came.

"It is your ship," said Gordon Bennett, "coming home to you."

I do not believe I was surprised when he spoke, for it was not the first time he had responded to my unuttered thought. He sat upon a lower bowlder at my right, his cap in his hand, his hair powdered by occasional showers of spray from an especially large breaker, while Mrs. Graham at my left was wrapped in a shawl and hovering over the fire. His voice was scarcely more than a whisper as he continued.

"It is bringing you many treasures. Pearls beyond price——"

"Pearls mean tears," I interrupted.

"Not these pearls; they are gems of real joy, spotless in their purity and of great value. There are other jewels, too—rubies, emeralds, diamonds—and sapphires like your eyes."

"But I want my ship to bring me more than jewels."

"There are other things. Perfumes and spices from Araby the Blest, gold straight from the mines without alloy; and perhaps, Miss Elise, it may bring you the elixir of eternal youth. Would you like that?"

I had a quick vision of Gabrielle and Elizabeth wrinkled and palsied by age, while I was still quite young and kittenish.

"No," I said, "I do not want eternal youth."

"But I want it for you. I should like to think you would always look as you do tonight."

"Where has it been?" I chose to ignore the implied compliment.

"The ship? To the Land of Dreams,

(Continued on Page 12.)

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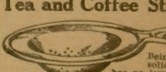

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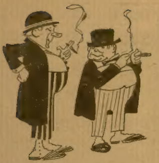


Hewitt—"Do you believe in preparedness?"

Jewett—"Sure! I always have a good story ready to tell my wife when I go home late."

◆

Such People!

"The Jibways want to borrow our car for this evening."

"I admire their nerve."

"You haven't heard the worst."

"Well?"

"They also want to know if we'd object to their pasting a label over our monogram."

More on the Way.

In full view of the crowd in a very busy street two venders of berries were busy with piles of thin wooden boxes, each scantily filled with immature fruit. Emptying box after box, the venders deftly punched up one layer of the box bottom to a sharp angle pointed in the middle, propped it there with paper, and then refilled the receptacle, taking great care that the finest and freshest-looking berries should make a showy top covering.

One of the spectators grew indignant. "How in the world," he demanded, "do you expect to sell your wares when you openly show that they are not what they seem to be."

"Aw, gwan," said the vender addressed. "This is New York, and there are more trains coming with more people."

◆

Hard-hearted.

"Why did you abandon your plan to become a doctor?" asked the motorist.

"I can't bear to see other people suffer," answered the garage man.

"Umph! I guess it's all in the point of view."

"How is that?"

"I notice you didn't shed any tears when you presented me with this bill for repairs."

◆

Checkered.

"Dad, what do you mean by a checkered career?"

"Always on the move, I reckon."

Had Done All Possible.

The dangers of travel by sea at this time have played havoc with the nerves of timid passengers.

Early one morning recently there was considerable commotion on the decks of a coastwise vessel plying between Savannah and Baltimore, when a scantily clad man hurried from his stateroom and dashed toward the upper deck. On the way he ran into the captain of the vessel.

"What's the matter, Captain?" he managed to gasp. "Have we been torpedoed?"

"Calm yourself, my dear sir, and be prepared for the worst," answered the official.

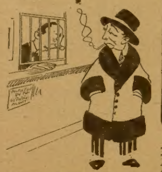
"Oh, don't tell me we're going down!" moaned the other. "Quick, where are the life preservers?"

"They wouldn't be of any service at this stage," explained the captain.

"Too late?" quavered the despairing passenger.

"Yes," said the captain, very solemnly. "We've done all we can for you. You'll have to look out for yourself from now on. You see, we've just tied up to the dock."

◆



Banker—"Your note's due tomorrow, Jinks!"

Jinks—"Not until then! How time drags when a chap's broke!"

◆

Called Off.

An amusing telephone story is told of a certain lady named Brown. One morning recently she proceeded from breakfast table to the telephone in the hall to order some things from her butcher.

"Hallon!" said Mrs. Brown. "Are you Bafys the butcher?"

"Yes."

"Well, this is Mrs. Brown's residence. Will you please send me a large, thick steak by twelve o'clock?"

The boy employed in the butcher's shop happened to answer the telephone and promptly responded:

"Well, you just bet your sweet life I will."

"Do you know, sir, to whom you are speaking?"

"Sure I do," said the boy. "You're Jenny, Mrs. Brown's cook."

"You are mistaken, young man. You are speaking to Mrs. Brown herself."

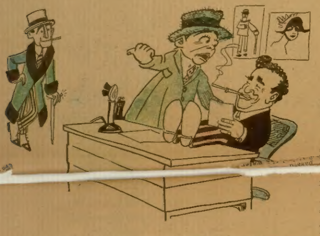
"Is that so?" replied the boy. "Then in that case, madam, we'll call the bet off."

◆

Otherwise Engaged.

"Why don't you subdivide your farm and sell it off as suburban lots?"

"No, sir," replied Farmer Corntossel. "With corn an' potatoes bringin' what they do, I haven't any land to waste on town halls and engine houses."



Mugger the Vaudevillian—"That guy's no good. He does nothin' but imitate my work."

Booker the Agent—"What's your act?"

Mugger—"Me? I give imitations."

His Chance.

Breakfast was being partaken of at a Southern boarding-house recently, and it was thought that the "funny man" of the company had expended all his anecdotal loquacity.

But it was not so. The irrepressible one raised the cup of tea to his lips, and after taking a little sip laid the cup on a chair beside him.

Wondering what was the matter, one of the visitors asked his reason for doing so.

This was his opportunity. "Well," he replied, confidentially, "the tea is so weak that I'm giving it a rest."

A Youthful Diplomat.

"Willie," said the doting aunt, holding her nephew close to her, "tell me whom you like best—your mother, your father or me."

Willie squirmed to get away. "I don't want to tell," he said. "It's too near Christmas."

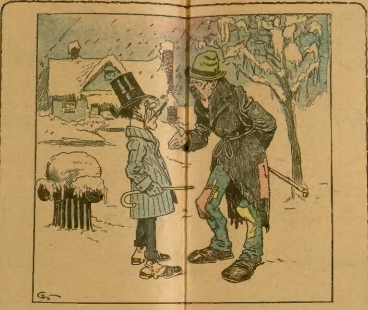
◆

The Experienced Husband.

"She threatens to sue for divorce."

"What's he say to that?"

"Nothing. When their quarrels get to that point he always keeps still. He's learned from experience that the next move will be a flood of tears."



Beggar—"Kind sir, my wife is starving to death!"

Henpeque—"Well, what do you want! Money or congratulations?"

HOLIDAY SMOKE.

Tobacco is a noxious weed—
Those words by little Robert Reed
Are true today, beyond a doubt,
As when he ground the verses out.
But Robert did not know the worst
When he his moral lines rehearsed.
The weed that model poet knew
Was plain tobacco as it grew,
And not a combination strange
Of herbs which now its flavor change.
Oh, Robert Reed, what would you say,
What words would you employ today
Should you inhale the vapors queer
Which sometimes fill the atmosphere?
However could you stigmatize
Those gift cigars that mother buys?

◆

A Lovers' Quarrel.

"I demand back my lock of hair."

"I'm sorry. I wanted that lock of hair."

"Surely after this quarrel you can treasure it no longer."

"Not as a matter of sentiment, but I am stuffing a sofa pillow."

Then the quarrel raged afresh.

◆

Curiosity Piqued.

"Don't think me meddlesome, but that's a sweet-scented note you have there."

"It's merely an engraved invitation from a tailor to look over his fall and winter fabrics. He scented the darned things so every man who gets one will be sure to open it."

◆

Easy Money.

"What did you say your business was?"

"I am a critic."

"You criticise people?"

"You might say so; yes."

"And do you mean to tell me you get paid for that?"

Her Orders.

"I won't have any dogs around the house. They track in mud, and that I won't have."

"But I like dogs," said her husband.

"Makes no difference. I'm boss around here."

"You are, eh? [illegible] I come in?"

"At the back door, and be sure that you wipe your feet, too."

◆

Luck.

"The great sorrow of their lives is that they have no children."

"Sorrow! They ought to consider themselves lucky. If they had children no landlord would rent a house to them."

◆

Taxes.

"This war seems to be taxing everything."

"Huh?"

"I see it is said to be taxing ingenuity now."

YELLOW.

A little yellow cur,
With a brief, convincing tail
And unupholstered ribs,
Sat shivering on the lake front.
It was a cold day
And the cur whined miserably,
And we invited it to a butcher shop.
But the cur whined some more
And said: "Thanks; I have no appetite.
Anyway, that isn't what's worrying me.
What gets my goat, and makes me meditate suicide,
Is the odium of the comparisons
You two-legged sinners use.
When one of your own miserable race
Shows a yellow streak, or whines in defeat,
You immediately say: 'Cur to the bone!'
And let it go at that.
You are unreasonable and unjust
To my forlorn kind.
We may whine when we are badly hurt,
But we never bite the hand that feeds us.
Think it over!"
And elevating its short narrative
The yellow cur walked haughtily away.

◆

Excusing Himself.

"You acknowledge that you haven't donated a cent to the war sufferers in Europe, yet you have given $5,000 to your party's campaign fund."

"That's true," replied the politician.

"Do you think that's right?"

"Why, yes. You see, I'm a firm believer in the old adage that charity begins at home."

◆

The Cautious Man.

"Does your husband subscribe to the theory that kissing transmits germs?"

"No, he thinks that germs are mostly transmitted by money and is very careful not to hand me any."

No Friend of His.

One morning as Justice Friedel was seated at his desk at the eastern police station, Baltimore, busily engaged in filling out the commitments, he was suddenly disturbed by an airy young negro, who brushed into the room and without more ado blurted out:

"Mohnin', squiah. I wants a warrant for a niggah who broke the peace last night by strikin' me on mah head with a brick. I didn't do nothin' to him. He jes' hit me, dat's all."

After inquiry Justice Friedel decided that he could issue the warrant, and forthwith began to fill out the warrant blank.

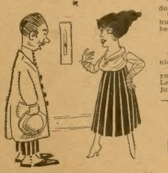
"What's your name?" inquired the magistrate.

"Charles Sewell, yo' honah," came the prompt response, "an' his name is Thomas Kane," Sewell continued, as Justice Friedel began to write.

"What did you say your friend's name is?" asked the justice.

"Fren'? Fren'?" grunted the complainant. "He ain't no fren' of mine. He hit me with a brick."

◆



Bibbs—"Bob's wife has run away with the chauffeur!"

Mrs. Bibbs—"Then she couldn't have loved Bob?"

Bibbs—"Not a bit! It was the best chauffeur Bob ever had!"

◆

Not a Pocket.

Money was none too plentiful in the Stiggins' household, therefore Jimmy, the son and heir, was forced to wear clothes that at one time had been worn by his gracious parent. This arrangement did not exactly appeal to Jimmy, for, whereas he was about 4 feet 6 inches in height, his father was well over 6 feet.

Mrs. Stiggins, however, had made earnest endeavors to cut the clothes down to a perfect fit for little Jimmy, but she had not been cut out for a tailoress, and the result of her efforts were rather ludicrous.

One day Jimmy was found by his father fumbling and grumbling about a waistcoat he had just taken over from his mother.

"What's the matter now?" asked Stiggins, senior.

"Why," exclaimed Jimmy, "this 'ere pocket ain't got no bottom to it."

"Pocket be blowed!" cried Mr. Stiggins. "That's a buttonhole!"

◆

True in Another Sense.

Friend (consolingly)—"So you're out of a job, eh? Well, don't worry about it. You were only wasting your time in a place like that, anyway."

Jenkins (sadly)—"Yes, that's what the boss said when he fired me."

Very Evident.

A farmer returning home late at night found a man standing beside the house with a lighted lantern in his hand. "What are you doing here?" he asked, savagely, suspecting he had caught a criminal. For answer came a chuckle, and "It's only mee, zur."

The farmer recognized John, his shepherd.

"It's you, John, is it? What on earth are you doing here this time o' night?"

Another chuckle. "I'm a-courtin' Ann, zur."

"And so you've come courting with a lantern, you fool. Why, I never took a lantern when I courted your mistress."

"No, zur, you didn't, zur," John chuckled. "We can all see you didn't, zur."

◆

Something in This.

"You women are always spending money for preparations to make yourselves better looking," growled Mr. Twobble.

"I guess that's true, my dear," replied Mrs. Twobble, sweetly.

"Now, you hardly ever see a man doing that."

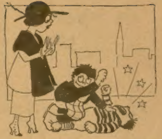
"No, because ninety-nine out of one hundred men realize that the quest of beauty is hopeless."

◆

Safety First.

"Dearest," he said, "can't I get you a nice diamond ring for Christmas?"

"No, darling," whispered the far-seeing young thing. "I will take the ring now. Let Christmas bring its happy surprises, just as usual."



"Little boy, little boy, you shouldn't fight that way."

"Hold off with your peace talk, lady. One more punch on the nose from me and I'll have this kid ready to listen to you."

◆

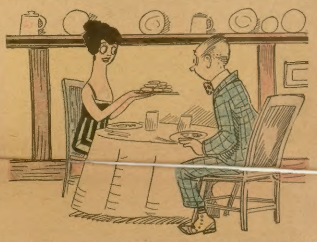
A Father's Hard Heart.

A young officer at the front wrote home to his father:

"Dear Father: Kindly send me $250 at once. Lost another leg in a stiff engagement and am in hospital without means."

The answer was as follows:

"My Dear Son: As this is the fourth leg you have lost (according to your letters), you ought to be accustomed to it by this time. Try and hobble along on any others you may have left."



Young Wife—"I made these with my own hands, Jack! How do you like them?"

Young Husband—"Best I ever ate, pet! Are they biscuits or dumplings?"

Ma Enters the Game.

"What do you want, ma?"

"You must go to the grocery store at once and get a pound of butter."

"But, ma, we're playin' war, an' I'm leadin' a British army against the Germans."

"Never mind. Play the commissary department has been shot to pieces and go after that butter."

◆

Cause of Shabbiness.

Miss Paul—"He says that he rubs elbows with a number of rich men."

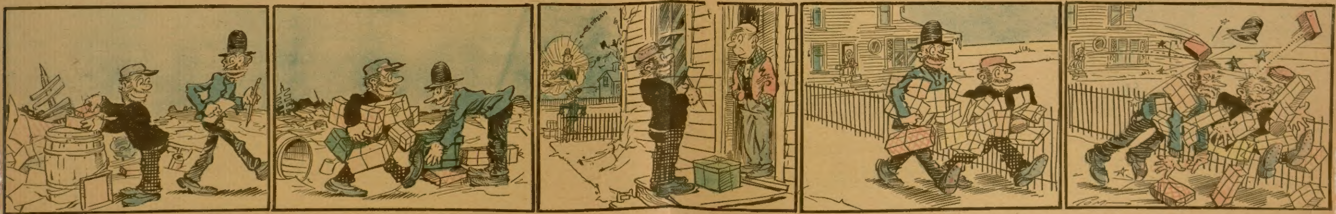
Miss Pry—"Is that what makes him so shiny?"

She Proved It.

Two women whose husbands are members of the faculty of Oberlin College went to call on the new professor's wife. They were shown into a room where the small daughter of the house was playing. While waiting the appearance of their hostess one of the women remarked to her friend, at the same time nodding toward the little girl, "Not very p-r-e-t-t-y, is she?" spelling the word so that the child should not understand.

Instantly, before there was time for the friend to reply, came the answer from the little girl, "No, not very p-r-e-t-t-y, but awfully s-m-a-r-t."

THE BRICKS CAME BACK



Gastronomic Gus—"Slim, while I fix up dese fake Christmas packages wid dese bricks, you git a lot o' names and addresses from de doorways."

Slim—"I got a good bunch of names, and now dat we got 'em on de packages, we kin start out an' deliver 'em C. O. D. an' c'lect a nice bunch o' coin fer de charges."

Man of the House—"Yep, Rodney Perkins is my name, but I ain't got two dollars for express charges. All I got's two bits."

Gastronomic Gus—"Well, dat'll do. I'll have de c'lector call tomorrow fer de rest."

Slim—"Stew bad ye couldn't 'a' got de two bones."

Gastronomic Gus—"Yep, but dat ain't such a bad start, dough. Even two bits ain't so bad fer——

"TWO BRICKS!"

The Smuggler.

(Continued From Page 8.)

—of course; and deep down in the hold beneath the jewels. I think it is bringing you ——"

"What [illegible]

"Ah, that is not for me to tell you. You must discover it yourself.'

"Suppose," I remarked, "it happens to be your ship, not mine. What then?"

"It isn't my ship, Miss Elise. Min[illegible] somewhere on the black water, but it has not reached the light as yet. I sent [illegible] long ago, and sometimes I have th[illegible] it was lost."

"Wrecked?"

"So I feared. But just lately I have begun to believe it will come safely home. Sometimes I have even dreamed I could see it coming into port and bringing me [illegible]

"What?"

"[illegible] heart's desire [illegible]

I wanted very much to ask him what it was, but something prevented. So I looked out over the rippling silver path and wished my ship was really coming home laden with treasures from the Land of Dreams.

I wondered, too, what I might discover hidden in the hold, and whether I would be able to find it without assistance. The little boat, however, merely sailed on, and I saw that it was going steadily away from me, taking with it my unknown treasures.

Gabrielle also had been watching it [illegible] her theories.

"[illegible] smuggler," she an[illegible]d, as one having authority in such matters.

"He is taking Mrs. Bundy's emeralds," supplemented Eliza[illegible] we ought to hope he will be wrecked."

"Do you wish it?"

"Why, no," Elizabeth hesitated; "no, Mr. Blake, I'm afraid I don't."

"Nor I," said Gabrielle; "somehow I can't help taking an interest in him. Every time I hear of a new lot of things being smuggled in I feel quite a thrill of relief. But I can't forgive the emeralds; he might have let the poor old woman alone."

"I suppose he could not resist them," said Lady Edith. "I have read somewhere that there is an irresistible impulse——"

"Could you understand such an impulse?" inquired Mr. Blake.

She considered a moment before re[illegible]

"No, I cannot understand it. I do not wish to be intolerant, but [illegible] inconceivable."

"Try," he insisted; "put yourself in his place and remember the temptation. Human nature is weak, you know."

Lady Edith rested her chin on her hand and thought a while. Mr. Blake and Mr. Graham gazed at the lovely face grown suddenly serious as she pondered the question, and I knew that Gordon Bennett forgot my very existence as he leaned forward awaiting her reply.

"It is hard for me to realize," she said slowly, "never having been tempted."

"How can any one know what he would do until the time comes?" interrupted Mr. Graham; "as to yielding to an impulse—well, why are we given impulses if not to obey them?"

"[illegible]'t that rather a dangerous the[illegible]

[illegible] there was [illegible] and she [illegible]tarily [illegible] brother, [illegible] still maintained his sulk[illegible] silence.

"A very dangerous theory," re[illegible]ed Mr. Bennett; "but to return to our discussion. Smuggling is [illegible] business, Lady Edith, and [illegible] some courage, too, for one [illegible] his life in his h[illegible] stormy nights when the [illegible]

"Yes," ejaculated Mrs. Graham; "y[illegible]

"Oh, I don't know," said her [illegible] 'It has its compensations. One li[illegible] know—lives. Think of a ni[illegible] there, with the waves mountain[illegible] stiff wind, and raining, perhaps. [illegible] black water, black everything [illegible] the uncertainty about landing [illegible] cargo safely. Then the sail back a[illegible] triumphant and exulting—you and the elements alone together. Can't you taste the salt spray? Can't you feel the boat cut thru the water? Can't you [illegible]

"Harry!"

He paused abruptly and turned to his wife.

"I beg your pardon, [illegible] very gently. "I quite forgot [illegible]sion to the water or I wouldn't [illegible] myself go."

As Elizabeth often insisted, there were nice things about Mr. Graham, after all. His patience with his wife's vagaries was certainly most commendable, yet I found myself reaching out after her hand as tho I understood and sympathized with her strange attitude—which I certainly did not.

Meanwhile the little boat [illegible] and whether it carried a smuggl[illegible] his ill-gotten spoils or my tre[illegible] from the Land of Dreams, we never knew, for it slipped away into the darkness as quietly as it had emerged. I felt as tho I had lost something very valuable as I looked out over the empty water, and the ensuing silence brought me no vaguely blissful dreams, but rather a sense of uneasiness and impending danger.

Our fire had burned itself away into a bed of embers, where charred bits of wood occasionally sent forth feeble flames as the night wind brought them renewed life. The moon climbed high in the heavens as we sat listening to the waves wash over the rocks while the embers glowed and paled and glowed again in indignant protest against their relegation to the ashes of the past.

Presently Lady [illegible] sing," she said.

And Harry Graham obeyed without self-conscious demur. Looking up at the rock where she sat with Elizabeth, he smiled and removed his cap

"If it will give you pleasure," he said, quite simply.

She made a gesture of assent and after a moment's silence he began to sing, softly at first, then his voice gradually attained its full compass. I have never heard a voice just like Harry Gra[illegible] —so strong and yet so sweet. It had a wonderful depth of tenderness about it, too, and we listened entranced, unwilling to lose a note or a word of his song, which was quite unfamiliar to me at least.

"Out of the purple distance,
  Over the surging sea,
Borne on the winds of heaven
  Cometh a Voice to me,
See how the white gull resteth
  Low o'er the tossing spray,
Pausing a while to listen
  Before it is up and away'

"O'er the trackless waste of waters
  Where nameless thousands sleep,
From the realm of endless s[illegible]
  Cometh the Voice of the Deep:
Hark, to the whispering water
  Bringing a message to me,
'Child of the restless ocean,
  Thy destiny waits for thee.'

'Where the far-away dim horizon
  Touches the mist-bound sea,
There lieth an Unknown Kingdom
  With its gates ajar for me.
And so, like the gull, I'm resting
  At peace o'er the tossing foam,
Just waiting, listening, longing
  For the Voice to call me home"

"Don't! Oh, Harry, don't."

Mrs. Graham had risen and was gazing at her husband with widely dilated eyes and arms extended. It was a cry of irrepressible suffering, apparently wrung from her against her will.

I reached her first, being nearest, and as I slipped my arm thru hers I found that she was trembling and very cold

Mr. Graham had reached his wife almost as soon as I had, and his voice was filled with genuine solicitude.

"Why, you're cold," he continued, awfully cold; your lips are quite blue and trembling. This night air has been too much for you, as you feared. I'm sorry I urged you to come, but I thought you would enjoy it."

She clung to him, oblivious of our presence.

"Take me home. I must go home"

"And so you shall"

He spoke gently, as one calms a frightened child, and still retaining her hand turned to Elizabeth

"I'm really very sorry, but we must go home. It has been an awfully jolly evening. Mrs. Graham is a bit unstrung, she's not strong, you know; I [illegible] to stay out [illegible] And of course [illegible]

[illegible] if slightly inco[illegible] to look as tho nothing surprising had happened, but I think we were all relieved when the Grahams finally departed. As we watched their retreating figures gradually grow smaller in the distance, Gabrielle voiced the question that trembled on my lips

"[illegible] shoulder [illegible] body [illegible] as the [illegible]able a gift [illegible] will [illegible] the embers no [illegible] sent out any heat, and the wind from the ocean had suddenly grown [illegible] and [illegible] Lady Edith also shivered and [illegible] her cloak closely about her.

"I think we, too, must go," she said; [illegible] ended. It [illegible] I shall al[illegible]

"[illegible] Mrs. Graham would remember it," remarked Gabrielle, "but I don't believe she thought it de[illegible]

We were gathering up our wraps preparatory to going home as she spoke, and Mr. Blake had just taken possession of the shawl spread upon the rock where Elizabeth had been sitting when she uttered an exclamation

"My ring! It is gone—my ruby ring."

This ring was Elizabeth's dearest possession and the pride of her heart. It was a marquise, formed of seven rubies surrounded by diamonds, and as all of the stones were unusually good it was really very valuable. We were aghast at the catastrophe and hastened to help her look for it.

"It can't be gone," exclaimed Gabrielle, turning over sticks and stones suspiciously; it must be here.

"[illegible] I should not have wo[illegible] It must have rolled into the water and I shall never see it again."

Elizabeth spoke in the hushed tone in [illegible] to those recently removed by death.

"Don't feel that way about it," said Lord Wilfrid, roused at last; "I am quite sure we will find it. Let's see—you sat here with Edith, and Graham and Mr. Blake just below. It might have caught in the fringe of the shawl. Perhaps Mr. Blake will kindly shake it."

Mr. Blake complied without result. Useless, also, was the ensuing search of the rocks, altho they were gone over inch by inch, the men lighting matches to examine dark crevices, while we scrutinized the most improbable places and tried to peer into the rapidly rising water

At last we gave it up and prepared to go home, each in turn assuring Elizabeth that when morning came she would surely find her ring, but nevertheless secretly convinced that it was irrevocably gone.

"I've had a good time, barring the last half-hour," said Gordon Bennett as he took my shawl; have you?"

"I don't know what Elizabeth will ever do without her ring," was my [illegible]

"[illegible] another. The jewels your [illegible]king you are far more val[illegible]

"Nonsense," I interrupted. "Can't you see that she is unhappy and we are all worried?"

"Please don't worry," he said; "tomorrow morning, bright and early, I'll have another look at the rocks. I'm rather a good prophet, and something tells me she will get it again. If I can't find it I'll get a diver and see what he can do. But I don't think we will need him, for when daylight comes it will probably be discovered exactly where [illegible] dropped it. Anyway, there is no use giving up a thing as lost until every possible means of finding it is exhausted. You won't worry, will you?"

These practical suggestions were very cheering, and I turned to repeat them to Elizabeth. She was saying good night to the Campbells, who had decided to return to the hotel along the shore. To my surprise I heard Lady Edith also suggesting the services of a diver.

"They are quite wonderful, you know," she was saying, "and all sorts of things have been recovered from the ocean."

"Yes," added Lord Wilfrid, "we will all have another look tomorrow, and if it is not to be found by daylight, I know of an expert diver. However, I'm sure when the tide goes out it will be left among the rocks."

So by degrees our guests departed and we returned to the cottage, rather de-

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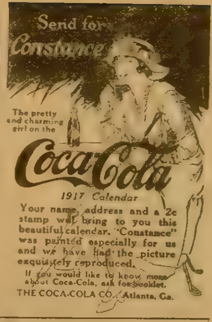
e above ingredients can be procured any drug store or if desired the ical Formula Laboratory, Dayton, , who publish these formulas, will supply the Toris Compound (50c), the Globe Pine Compound Aromatic (50c), the Calocide (25c) direct by mail, postpaid.



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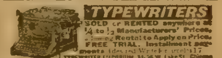

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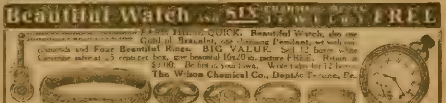

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pressed and inclined to consider the evening a failure.

Mary Anne met us, holding the door hospitably open and smiling expansively.

"Well," she remarked, "and did you 'ave a good time? And didn't I 'ave a good supper?"

We told her about Elizabeth's loss and she listened in silence. But her ruddy face drew serious and her jaw drooped, as we described our search among the rocks and our theory that the ring had dropped into the sea.

"Lost, is it?" she said at last; "don't you fret, Miss Elizabeth, dear. I know them rocks inch by inch, and I'll 'ave a look meself, so I will. Jest go to sleep and rest easy now."

We were glad to follow this sensible advice, but I think we all were some time in getting to sleep. I found myself thinking of Mrs. Graham, rather than the lost ring, and wondering vaguely why she did not like to hear her husband sing. The puzzle was too much for me, and I was just slipping into a blissful state of unconsciousness when I thought I heard a step under my window.

After a moment's indecision I crept across the room and looked out from behind the drawn curtain. There was nothing in sight. In the clear moonlight I could see quite as distinctly as by day, and the white stillness was wonderfully comforting. It was rather awesome, too, and while I felt the fascination of the night I was also conscious of the rather creepy sensation one experiences when the world sleeps, leaving one wakeful and alone with nature.

Out before me stretched the path leading to the village and my eyes followed it unconsciously until it turned sharply and disappeared. As I looked two shadows fell across it, seeming very black against the surrounding whiteness. One was short, fat, and shapeless; the other long, thin, and somewhat like an elongated pair of tongs—a very specter of a shadow. They moved, merged themselves into an indiscriminate mass, separated and came together again, a black streak marking their progress around the corner.

I clung to the window frame, deriving some comfort from contact with the solid wood. A pricking sensation ran up and down my spine and I was incapable of moving or uttering a sound.

In a second I was glad I had not spoken, for the shadows again detached themselves. I heard the crunching of gravel, and a familiar figure appeared around the turn of the path. It was Mary Anne, a red shawl held over her head, and no words can express the relief and comfort I felt at seeing her ample figure prosaically proceeding toward the kitchen door. I was rather indignant, too, and went down to ask her what she meant by such nocturnal rambles.

I found her collapsed upon a kitchen chair, breathing heavily. Upon seeing my white-clad form close beside her she uttered a stifled scream, then immediately stole my thunder by reproaching me for prowling around the house in the dead of night and frightening people out of their wits

In fact, she became so eloquent that instead of the dignified rebuke I had intended to administer I found myself apologizing for my presence and promising to be more considerate in the future.

"But, Mary Anne," I ventured to remark, "where have you been? I was frightened to death."

Mary Anne at once became propitiatory and sympathetic.

"Pore child," she exclaimed, "of course you was upset! It was Miss Elizabeth's ring—I got to thinkin' about the best way to find it. So I went to my brother Dan, 'im as lives in the little 'ouse jest below the bluff (which you know is gospel truth, miss). And I begged 'im to take 'is boat and go round them rocks early, miss, and see what 'e could find. Fur I wanted to give it to 'er fust thing when she wakes——"

Mary Anne paused for breath, and I felt a thrill of compunction, for, after all, she had been out on our account and solely to do us a service

"And that was your brother with you, I suppose," I remarked "Does he think he can find the ring?"

She looked at me a moment without replying, then walked to the door and bolted it.

"Yes, miss," she said, "Dan 'as 'opes. Not that they're very 'igh 'opes, fur Dan ain't much at lookin' at the bright side. But 'e'll do 'is dooty, miss, and I think Miss Elizabeth may find her ring, tho of course I can't be sure—no more can Dan. Now you'd better go to bed, Miss Elise, fur you need your sleep and I need mine

I was very willing to follow this advice, and felt hopeful that morning would bring good news to Elizabeth, for Mary Anne's brother had inspired me with a feeling of confidence Gordon Bennett's diver had not produced. As I lay thinking dreamily of him and wondering whether he would get his boat out early and go to work a sudden recollection of his appearance overpowered me

We were all familiar with Mary Anne's brother. He was a short, stockily built man, with very broad shoulders and short bowed legs. It seemed improbable that he could cast a shadow like a pair of tongs, but then, as every one knows, shadows are not to be depended upon.

This strange story leads to very extraordinary situations and dramatic episodes. The reader will find it eminently worth reading to the end. Next week's Ledger will contain further chapters of it. The surest way to get the Ledger is to subscribe for it, and have it come to your home regularly. Today is a good time to attend to this.

* * *

The Visitor.

"I've had an urgent letter from my married daughter out West asking me to go there and visit the family for two or three weeks at the Christmas season" said the retired merchant, "and I gue[illegible] I'll go. They have three or four children and I've never seen some of them. I hope to make a great hit as a grandfather."

"Well, of course it's a good thing to visit your daughter at Christmas time," remarked the hotelkeeper, "but if you take my advice you won't stay more than twenty-four hours. If you just blow in on her family and shake hands all around, and give the kids some candy and picture books, and then blow out again, those young ones will always look upon you as a sort of fairy godfather, and will speak your name reverently, but if you loaf around there two or three weeks they'll size you up as a stuffed prophet and make life a burden to you.

"I have a married daughter of my own, and, by a singular coincidence, she h[illegible] several children, and three or four years ago she insisted that I should go to her place and make a good long visit. So I went at Christmas time. My daughter had educated her children in the belief that I was a great and good man, and when I first got there they looked upon me with awe. They listened to every word of mine as tho a doggone oracle was speaking, and I thought I had never seen such nice kids. Had I gone away after staying one day all would have been well, but I stayed on, and pretty soon those children began to lose their respect for me. They saw that I was merely human. It beats all how quick kids can size you up and govern themselves accordingly.

"I always lie down after the midday banquet and take a nap, and my daughter provided a sofa in the sitting-room for this function. Well, I must admit that my snoring is out of tune, but when I'm at home nobody pays any attention to it. The second day I was at my daughter's I woke up after a few lines of refreshing slumber and found those kids standing around looking at me as a man might look at a pink ostrich in a menagerie. They insisted that I should snore some more. It reminded them of their Uncle Andrew's sawmill, they said. Later in the day some visitors dropped in, and I was posing as a distinguished old gentleman of culture and refinement, and those kids began clamoring to have me snore again, so the company could hear. I never was up against anything more embarrassing.

"When I first went there they had the idea that a grandfather was a gorgeous sort of individual, superior to ordinary human weaknesses, but my stock slumped like thunder when I had an attack of rheumatism and had to sit around anointing fetlocks with liniment That reminded them that old Gaffer Gooseman used to have rheumatism, and used to soak himself with liniment, and he went to the poorhouse. Children always associate ideas together in a queer way, doggone them, and those kids came to the conclusion that I was destined for the poorhouse. They expressed their convictions to other children, and those children passed the story along, and so it got to be the talk of the town that I was just stopping at my daughter's temporarily before taking up permanent quarters at the poor farm, and my daughter came in for a lot of criticism

"Well, inside of a week those kids had me sized up as a false alarm, and they began playing tricks on me, which is a thing I despise. When I was taking my afternoon nap they tied a string to my shoe and then fastened it to the chairs and things, and when I got up I upset all the furniture in the room and made such a racket that my daughter came with her seven-league boots on. When I explained to her what the kids had done she flew up and said I must be in my dotage, for her little darlings wouldn't dream of doing such a thing, she said I must have tied that string myself.

"I saw that it was time to do a vanishing stunt, so I packed my kit of burglar's tools and left for home on the first train. Had I stayed just one day I'd still be the high man with those kids"

* * *

Ambiguous.

"What's this about you're telling around that I had a big head?"

"There's nothing in it."

* * *

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HOLLY SONG.

The boughs are all bare save the holly bough there,
Cry hey and cry ho for the holly!
How its leaves show their sheen in the Christmastide air,
As green as the spring and as fresh and as fair!
Cry hey and cry ho for the holly!

Oh, the berries are bright as the morn's vermeil light,
Cry hey and cry ho for the holly!
A boon in the moon do they seem to the sight
Like the gleam of a dream at the droop o' the night!
Cry hey and cry ho for the holly!

Let us deem them a sign of a dawning divine—
Cry hey and cry ho for the holly!
As the branches we hang, as the branches we twine—
Of His love for mankind that has ceased not to shine!
Cry hey and cry ho for the holly!
—Clinton Scollard in Columbian.

* * *

Singleton—"They say that marriage is a tie."

Wadmore—"You'll find it so if you get roped in."

Christmas.

All Christian nations celebrate Christmas, but no two celebrate it precisely alike. The legend varies greatly as to its structure; its patron saint, usually a man, is sometimes a woman. In Russia it is old Dame Babonca who distributes the gifts on her way to Bethlehem in search for the wise men and the Christ child, while in sunny Italy it is Mother Goose who does Santa Claus' bidding. But whether the patron saint be the legendary character seeking the babe in the manger or the jolly individual who goes about scattering gladness and good cheer, the custom of remembering others with gifts is an essential feature of the observance everywhere, and the varying legends, when traced far enough, always come back to the Christ child. We observe the day best when in our giving we reproduce the same spirit that prompted the patron saints of the different legends.

Christmas in Germany is observed differently than it is in America. There is no hanging up of stockings nor decorating of Christmas trees. Instead, the celebration occurs on the night before Christmas, when the different members of the family gather beneath the parental roof, where a feast is prepared. After dining they adjourn to the large sitting-room, in the center of which an immense table has been placed. Here the Christmas gifts are stacked. They are covered with a large cloth, and at the word of command of the family patriarch this covering is removed and the presents are on view.

Not alone does the family officiate in this celebration, but for one night in the year the servants meet on a common level with their masters and fraternize.

The social side of the Italian Christmas evidences the same deep feeling as that of the religious. There is not much levity to it. The families exchange presents and tokens of affection, and a feature of the day is the late dinner, which usually occurs about nine or ten o'clock and continues until midnight, the various members of the family sipping wine, cracking nuts, eating sweets and enjoying to the utmost the society of one another. Italian families make it a point to reunite at Christmas, if at no other time of the year, members of the families frequently coming many thousands of miles to participate in the annual Christmas joys. Christmas with the Italians is not a holiday; it is a sacrament.

In their national celebration Norway and Sweden have got closer to the real spirit of the day than the majority of countries. At this season every one is expected to be at peace with his neighbor. All quarrels cease and the courts are absolutely closed. A pretty symbol of the spirit is the Yule-night practice of placing in a row every pair of shoes in each household, typifying that during the year the family will live in peace and harmony.

Classified Want Ads

Classified Want Ad Information

The rate for one insertion in Chicago Ledger and one insertion in The Saturday Blade is 30 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size of ad or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500 N. Dearborn St. CHICAGO, ILL.

SALESMEN WANTED

WERE YOU EVER OFFERED A GROCERY Store? Our proposition is better. Let us tell you how you can handle Flour, Canned Goods, Provisions—an entire line of Groceries, as well as Paints, Roofing, Stock Foods, Automobile and Machinery Oils and Greases. No rent to pay, no investment in stock. Large orders taken from samples. Goods of guaranteed and proven quality. Selling experience not necessary. Very profitable work for "workers." Address R. S. Hill, President, Hitchcock Hill Co., Chicago. Reference: Any bank or express company

AGENTS WANTED

WHO WANTS TO MAKE MORE MONEY selling brushes that every household needs? Special method of getting entrance to demonstrate. Fuller Sanitary Brushes are nationally ad[illegible] largest output—best terms and [illegible]ern distributing stations. Your [illegible] Write Fuller Brush Com[illegible] Rock Island, Ill.

BIG TEXTILE MILLS WANT AMBITIOUS men and women everywhere to show latest dress fabrics, neckwear, hosiery, underwear, [illegible] easy sales. Values [illegible] weekly. All or spare time. Complete sample outfit starts you. Steadfast Mills, [illegible] St., Cohoes, N. Y.

AGENTS—SNAPPIEST HOUSEHOLD LINE on earth. Red hot sellers, steady repeaters—100% profit. 250 light weight, fast selling popular priced necessities. Agent's outfit free. Get busy—quick—write today; postal [illegible]

HANSON NOW MAKING $115 WEEKLY selling Buckeye raincoats; we deliver and collect; outfit free; $3.95 up; direct from manufacturer. Buckeye Manufacturing Co., 1 Union Square, New York.

EXCLUSIVE SALES AGENT WANTED IN every county. Position worth $750 to $2,000 yearly. We specially train our agents. Have us show you. Novelty Cutlery Co., 123 Bar St., Canton, Ohio.

LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS REPREsentatives to sell shirts, underwear, hosiery, dresses, waists, skirts, direct to homes. Write for free samples. Madison Mills, 586 Broadway, New York City.

AGENTS—PAIR SILK HOSE FREE. STATE [illegible]. Beautiful line direct from [illegible] profits. Write today. Triple[illegible] M[illegible] Dept. F, 112 So. 13th St., Philadelphia.

AGENTS—I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME [illegible] New stuff. 100% profits. [illegible] layout free. Write quick [illegible] Dept [illegible] St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS SELL RELIABLE CUSTOM MADE [illegible] Big commission. Complete sample [illegible] free. Temple Raincoat Co., Box 81, Templeton, Mass.

WE PAY $36 A WEEK AND EXPENSES TO men with rigs to introduce poultry compound. Year's contract. Imperial Mfg. Co., Dept. 67, Parsons, [illegible]

SOMETHING NEW IN PORTRAITS AND frames. Agents wanted; write for catalogue and special inducements to new customers. Southern Art Co., Oak Park, Ill.

AGENTS WRITE—ARTICLE NO HOUSEwife can resist. Franklin Co., 7th St., Three Rivers, Mich.

HELP WANTED

THOUSANDS GOVERNMENT JOBS OPEN to Men—Women. $75.00 month. Steady Work. Short hours. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for free list of positions now obtainable. Franklin Institute, Dep't. S 30, Rochester, N. Y.

LADY OR GENTLEMAN TO TRAVEL FOR old-established firm. No canvassing. Staple line. $18 weekly, pursuant to contract. Expenses advanced. G. K. Nichols, Philadelphia, Pa., Pepper Bldg.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

OVER $2 DAILY EASILY EARNED KNITting at home. Auto-Knitters furnished on ime. Send 2c stamp. Dept. 78, Auto Knitter o., 147 Franklin St., Buffalo, N. Y.

ECOME CHAUFFEURS. $25 WEEK. LEARN while earning. Sample lessons Free. nklin Institute, Dep't. S 810, Rochester, Y.

E WILL PAY YOU $75.00 PER MONTH to travel, collect names, advertise and distribute samples. Expenses advanced. Write ey, Stanton Co., 202 Pope Bldg., Chicago,

5 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. Ursus Company, pt A1, Chicago, Ill.

YS: EARN CHRISTMAS MONEY! WRITE G. W. Ferguson, Box 15, Hudson City Sta sey City, N. J.

5 WEEKLY COLLECTING NAMES AND addresses. Send stamp. [illegible] V. [illegible]

MALE HELP WANTED

MEN WANTED IMMEDIATELY, TO QUALify for Firemen, Brakemen, Electric Motormen, $70-$100 monthly. Experience unnecessary. Write quick, stating position and locality desired. Railway Service Bureau, 1412 International Bldg., St. Louis, Mo.

DO YOU WANT A SURE JOB WITH BIG pay, easy hours and rapid advance? Write for my big Free book DW 1931 which tells you how you can get a good Government position. Earl Hopkins, Washington, D. C.

GOVERNMENT RAILWAY MAIL, POST OFfice, rural carrier "exams" everywhere soon. Get prepared by former Government civil service examiner. Booklet free. Arthur Robert Patterson, Rochester, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE. EARN FROM $150.00 to $300.00 per month; travel over the world. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

GOVERNMENT EXAMINATIONS — THORough instruction, $5. Returned if not appointed. Particulars free. American Civil Service School, Washington, D. C.

WANTED RAILWAY MAIL CLERKS. $75.00 month. Sample examination questions free. Franklin Institute, Dep't. S 28, Rochester, N. Y.

NO STRIKE: 8 HOUR DAY. MEN EVERYwhere. Firemen, Brakemen, Baggagemen, $120. Colored Porters, experience unnecessary. 686 Railway Bureau, E. St. Louis, Ill.

RELIABLE AGENT WANTED. MARVELous new sickness, accident, death insurance. Box 831-E, Chicago.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, ALL RAILROADS, beginners $120 monthly. Railway Association, Monroe, Brooklyn, N. Y.

SILVER MIRRORS, PLATING TABLE[illegible] Home [illegible] free. [illegible] Mar[illegible], Ind.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

FIVE BRIGHT, CAPABLE LADIES TO travel, demonstrate and sell dealers. $25 to $50 per week. Railroad fare paid. Goodrich Drug Company, Dept. 85, Omaha, Neb.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

INVEST $10—MAY MAKE FORTUNE. MILlions being made by fortunate investors in Great Costal Oil Fields. Single wells have produced upwards of $15,000 daily. Absolute guarantee of production furnished. Small monthly payments secure big interest with us in valuable oil leases on which we plan to drill many wells. Write for literature. Great Southern Oil Association, 1300 Carter Building, Houston, Texas.

$15 INVESTED MAY MAKE $1,000 YEARLY. Gets warranty deed, also interest in cooperative oil well we're getting ready to drill in big gusher oil territory. $1 cash, $1 monthly. Four lots $56. Buy before raise in price, which may be soon. Particulars free. Triangle Oil Company, 407 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas.

$20 BUYS DEED TO LAND, ALSO INTERest in oil wells that should pay you $100 for every dollar invested, payments $1 monthly; complete information free. Address Texas-Gulf Co., 1105 Union Bank, Houston, Texas.

PORT COSTING MILLIONS OPENED. First Inner Harbor lots offered; terms anybody can buy; fortunes await early buyer; free illustrated literature. Inner Harbor Company, 426 Carter Bldg., Houston, Texas

FARM LANDS FOR SALE

VIRGINIA, N. C., W. VA., AND OHIO FARMS at $15.00 per acre and up offer big value for the price. Best climate, markets, schools and transportation. Good land and neighbors. Write F. H. LaBaume, Agrl. Agt., N. & W. Ry., 248 Arcade, Roanoke, Va.

LANDLESS MEN! TEN ACRES MEANS independence. Excellent tracts for poultry, truck, fruit, near town. Best county in Michigan. Only $250. $5 down, $4 monthly. Other lands for general farming. Write for free booklet. Swigart Land Co., X1249 First National Bank Bldg., Chicago, Ill

REAL ESTATE

BEST OPPORTUNITIES TODAY ARE IN the South for farm and other homeseekers. Low priced lands, largest profits per acre in grain, alfalfa and other crops, healthful home regions; openings for live stock, dairy, poultry, fruit and truck farmers. Write for literature. M. V. Richards, Ind. & Agr. Commr., Room 5 Southern Railway, Washington, D. C.

A SMALL FARM IN CALIFORNIA WILL make you more money with less work. You will live longer and better. Delightful climate. Rich soil. Hospitable neighbors. Good roads, schools and churches. Write for our San Joaquin Valley illustrated folders free. C. L. Seagraves, Industrial Commissioner, AT&SF Ry., 1931 Ry. Exch., Chicago.

FARMS WANTED

I HAVE CASH BUYERS FOR SALABLE farms. Will deal with owners only. Give full description, location and cash price. James P. White, New Franklin, Mo.

FARMS WANTED— HAVE 7,000 BUYERS, describe your unsold property. 504 Farmers Exchange, Denver, Colo.

MOVING PICTURE PLAYS

WRITE PHOTOPLAYS; $25-$300 PAID. EXperience unnecessary; details free to new writers. Producers League, 400, St. Louis.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

MAKE MONEY QUICK—IN MOVING PICture business. We start you and furnish guaranteed outfit on easy payment plan. No experience needed. Catalog free. Monarch Film Service, 228 Union Ave., Dept. C, Memphis, Tenn.

$35.00 PROFIT NIGHTLY. SMALL CAPITAL starts you. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog Free. Atlas Moving Picture Co., Franklin Bldg., Chicago.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

WRITERS!—STORIES, POEMS, PLAYS, etc., are wanted for publication. Literary Bureau, B4, Hannibal, Mo.

INVENTIONS

INVENTIONS COMMERCIALIZED ON CASH and royalty basis. Inventors and manufacturers write at once. Adam Fisher Mfg. Co., 2044 Railway Exchange, St. Louis, Mo.

SONG POEMS WANTED

SONG POEMS WANTED—FOR BEST OFFER submit manuscript to Needham Music Co. D-44, St. Louis, Mo.

HONEY

BEST QUALITY NEW CLOVER HONEY. 30 lb. can $3.60; two or more cans, $3.45 each. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Sample 10 cts. Price list free. M. V. Facey, Preston, Minn.

OLD COINS WANTED

OLD COINS AND STAMPS OF ALL KINDS. From $1.00 to $1000.00 cash paid for some to 1912. Keep all old money and stamps. Send 4c. Get large illustrated Coin and Stamp Circular. You have nothing to lose. Send now. Numismatic Bank, Dept. 12, Fort Worth, Texas

MOTORCYCLES, AUTOMOBILES

100 MOTORCYCLES $40-$95, AUTOMObiles $75-$350, cash talks. Knights, 3323 Locust, St. Louis, Mo.

NAMES

WE PAY 25c EACH FOR NAMES AND ADdresses. Send dime for contract. Directory, Grand Rapids, Mich.

PATENTS

PATENTS SECURED OR FEE RETURNED. Actual search and patentability report free. Send sketches and description, or model, of your invention. My patent sales service gets full value. 1916 Edition ninety-page patent book free. George P. Kimmel, 260 Barrister Building, Washington, D. C.

WANTED, AN IDEA! WHO CAN THINK of some simple thing to patent? Protect your ideas, they may bring you wealth. Write for "Needed Inventions," "Patent Buyers," and "How to Get Your Patent and Your Money." Randolph & Co., Patent Attorneys, Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

INVENT SOMETHING. IT MAY BRING wealth. Free book tells what to invent and how to obtain a patent through our credit system. Waters and Co. Succeeded by Talbert & Parker, 4276 Warder Bldg., Washington, D. C.

PATENTS THAT PROTECT. ADVICE AND Books Free. Highest references. Watson E. Coleman, Patent Lawyer, 624 F St., Washington, D. C.

PERSONAL

MEN ON THE DOWN GRADE, REMEMBER we cure varicocele, stricture, chronic, nervous, blood, kidney, bladder and private diseases. Book symptom blank and advice free, sealed. Hinze Medical Institute, 22 Washington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

LET ME READ YOUR CHARACTER FROM your handwriting. Mind you get a good reading that will help you in love, health, business and domestic affairs. Price 10c. Money back if dissatisfied. H. G. Beauchamp, 2583 8th Ave., New York City.

PERSONAL—WANTED QUICK—NAME AND address of reliable single man who would marry wealthy lady who could assist him financially. Enough said. If interested, write quick for more particulars. Address Allen Ward (B 520), Valley, Nebr.

A LETTER TO DR. ROWE THE SPECIAList will obtain his latest book on symptoms and cure for varicocele, stricture and urinary diseases. Every man should have it; postage 4 cents. Send today. Dr. Rowe, 112 N. Pear St., Buffalo, N. Y.

HERB BOOK. KEY TO HEALTH 10C. Shows how to make medicine for all diseases. Hundreds of valuable formulas and herb secrets. Joseph Edwards, Dept. 2, 326 Madison St., Chicago.

BIG MARRIAGE DIRECTORY MAILED ABsolutely free. Hundreds noble ladies seek early marriage. Many are handsome and wealthy. Ideal Directory, 538 So. Dearborn St., Chicago.

MARRY RICH. BE HAPPY AND PROSPERous. Big list of descriptions and photos of congenial people with means free. Sealed, confidential. Either sex. Standard Club, Box 607, Grayslake, Ill.

REAL PHOTOS, ARTISTS' MODELS, BATHing girls, etc. Silver dime brings sample and catalog. B. W. Shaw, 44 Boylston St., Boston.

MARRIAGE PAPER COMPLETE WITH photos, descriptions, names and addresses, 3 months for 25c. Wren, 44 Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRY—FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 31, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and description free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 28, Kansas City, Mo.

RELIABLE CLUB ESTABLISHED 10 YEARS. Large list wealthy members. Confidential; descriptions free. Mrs. Wrubel, 722 Madison, Oakland, Cal.

MARRY IF LONELY; HUNDREDS RICH wish marriage soon; confidential; descriptions free. "The Successful Club," Box 556, Oakland, Calif.

$1000 BOND, NEW DIME, $5 STATE BILL lot 25c. A. E. Bousall, Richmond, Indiana.

MAIDEN, WORTH $100,000, VERY LONELY, would marry good man. G. G., Box 4, San Diego, Cal.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL paper published. Mailed Free. The Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

MARRY RICH. HUNDREDS ANXIOUS TO marry. Descriptions and photos free. R. Unity, Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRIAGE PAPER FREE; BEST PUBlication for sure results; reliable. Eastern Agency 55, Bridgeport, Connecticut.

MARRY:—10,000 WORTH $100 TO $100,000; paper sealed 10c. B. W. Love, Box 1616, Denver, Colo.

SEND 10C AND RECEIVE ALABAMA Weekly Times one year. Tells about great and growing South. Times, Montgomery, Ala.

Chicago Ledger

Entered as second-class matter June 25, 1885, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under act of March 3, 1879.

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By W. D. BOYCE CO., CHICAGO, ILL.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

Single subscriptions to the Chicago Ledger by mail $1.00 a year, 50 cents for six months, in advance. Remittances should be made by Bank Draft, Registered Letter, Postoffice or Express Money Order, payable to the Chicago Ledger. The address tab on your paper shows the date to which your subscription is paid.

BACK NUMBERS.

Back numbers of the Ledger promptly mailed. Always give the dates desired, plainly written, accompanied by your full address. Price 5 cents per copy.

ADVERTISING RATES.

For Display, $2.50 each Agate Line: for Classified, 30 cents a word, per insertion for circulation of the Chicago Ledger and The Saturday Blade combined. These two weeklies have an average circulation of

5,000,000
READERS WEEKLY.

GENTLE JABS

However, the buying is still good

Most women keep a lot of sympathy on tap

Even experience is unable to teach a fool anything.

Paradox—To become round eat plenty of square meals.

If too proud to beg and too honest to steal—get trusted

Some men work harder to get even than to earn money.

Many a self-made man tries to blame the job on his wife.

When a man pays his way in he seldom has to pay his way out.

Marrying a man to reform him is like drinking whisky to destroy it.

A rolling stone gathers no moss, but it's different with a rolling joke.

Women either love or hate; there's no happy medium in their affections.

Silence may be golden, but it won't pay the expenses of the drummer.

Christmas is rapidly approaching. Don't forget to unhoard your money.

Talk less and think more. This is good advice to give but hard to take.

And many a girl's shirtwaist is rumpled because of too much pressing

One trouble with reform is that every man wants to apply it to the other fellow

Many a man who attempts to blow his own horn comes out at the little end of it

Don't give your husband too much rope Christmas. Give him real cigars for a change

An ex-spinster says it is almost as hard to live with a husband as it is to live without one.

Books are man's best friends; when they bore him he can shut them up without giving offense.

A man of experience says getting married is about the same as filing a petition in bankruptcy.

However, the late shopper's wild outburst of enthusiasm and generosity usually carries him thru with credit

A woman never knows a man until after she marries him: then she begins to find him out nearly every night.

When you give free advice and it works you get no thanks, and if it doesn't work you get what's coming to you

In contemplating what he has done for others, the average man is prone to forget what the others have done for him.

Uncle Sam is almost afraid to hang up his stocking lest a peevish and overworked congressional Santa Claus put a cocklebur in it.

Home and Health

FASHION NOTES.

Jet is one of the smart hat trimmings this year and so there are many jet ornaments for sale.

The one-piece dress, which has attained such popularity this season, is developed in many delightful styles.

Individuality appears to be the keynote of the new models of blouses, and from the endless variety of styles shown it will surely be an easy matter for any woman to select models that are not what "every one is wearing," but are particularly adapted to her own type and personality.

Chiffon, Georgette crepe and all other diaphanous materials, whether they are used for gowns or are a part of costumes of silk or cloth, are usually trimmed with embroideries. There is something pleasingly piquant about a bit of embroidery applied to a delicate diaphanous material. Often when used on these airy fabrics the embroidery is quite heavy, but is confined to a small space. A great quantity of it would naturally be apt to pull the material out of shape.

◆

NEEDLEWORK.

Cross-stitch is effectively applied to many handkerchiefs. A pretty gift can be made in quick time by using Dutch-blue cotton or silk to cross-stitch a design in the corner of a handkerchief.

Boudoir pillow covers do not necessarily have to be embroidered to be dainty. Good-looking ones are simply lace trimmed. One seen recently had two three-inch bands of fine cluny insertion set in diagonally across either corner, and the effect, it must be conceded, was excellent.

Bright color is no disgrace to the luncheon table these days. Colored centerpieces and doilies are replacing the all white effects that have been fashionable of late. In the department where cretonne is sold one may buy a yard or two of striped cretonne on which are medallion figures representing plate and tumbler doilies and a large center piece, all to match, with a scalloped edge and festoon floral design. The cretonne may be spread on the table as it is, or the doilies and centerpieces cut out and used separately.

◆

HEALTH NOTES.

It rests you, in sewing, to change your position.

A little soda water will relieve sick headache caused by indigestion.

One with a sluggish liver should have more outdoor exercise and a hot tub bath daily. She should use either a loofa or bath brush and dry with a Turkish towel. It is well to drink the juice of one lemon in a cup of hot water before breakfast every morning and walk at least a mile every morning and walk briskly, not saunter

If a child's first teeth decay before it is time to shed them they should certainly be filled. In the first place they are needed for mastication and they assist the formation of the jawbone, they steer the second teeth into their proper place and the second teeth derive quite a little nourishment from the first. Therefore, children should be taught to clean their teeth at a very early age, as cleanliness prevents decay.

Callouses on the feet will be made less painful if they are cared for every night The soles should be soaked for at least ten minutes in warm water. A piece of fine pumice stone is then rubbed on the hard spots until the soft flesh is reached. Then they are anointed with vaseline, and a little pad of absorbent cotton bound on to prevent the grease from rubbing. In the morning more vaseline is put on, and, if possible, a corn plaster, the hole enlarged not to press on the callous, is put around. If the latter is not practicable, wearing soft felt soles in the shoes will give relief

◆

FOR THE HOUSEWIFE.

Dry flour applied with a newspaper is an excellent and easy way to clean tinware

New tinware will not rust if greased with a little fresh lard and baked in the oven before it is used.

When dropping muffin dough into the tins first dip the spoon into boiling water and the dough will not stick to the spoon

A pad of thick paper laid over the edge of each step under the carpet will prevent it from wearing ,and it will last much longer.

◆

Old Contestants in W. D Boyce Co.'s $4,000 Cash Game, caution: If you are going to submit a homemade set of answers, be sure you bind your pictures at the tops so they will not become lost You must draw each picture on a separate piece of white paper 5x8 inches in size. You must not trace the pictures, they must be drawn free hand. Why not get the Complete Outfit, only 50 cents, and save yourself time, labor and trouble? Order before December 23rd

RECIPES.

VANILLA CRAB APPLE JELLY—When putting up crab apple jelly get ten cents' worth of vanilla beans from any drug store. When the juice is strained and measured throw in the piece of vanilla bean and let it boil until jelly is made. It gives apple jelly a fine and delicate flavor.

OYSTER CATSUP—Beard 100 oysters, pound them in a mortar or earthen bowl, strain juice, add to one pint of sherry one ounce salt one-half teaspoonful each of cayenne and ground mace. When it comes to a boil rub it thru a sieve. Bottle when cold.

SALMON SANDWICHES—Remove the bones from one can of salmon and discard the liquid. Mash and mix to a smooth paste with mayonnaise or boiled dressing. Spread on thin slices of well-buttered bread. Place a crisp lettuce leaf in each sandwich and cut into triangles. Wrap each sandwich in paraffin paper.

If I Send You this Suit

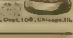
made to your measure, in the latest style, loose box back, would you be willing to keep and wear it, show it to your friends and let them see our beautiful samples and dashing new styles.

Could you use $5.00 a day for a little spare time? Perhaps I can offer you a steady job. If you will write me a letter or a postal card at once and say "Send me your special offer," I will send you samples and styles to pick from and my *surprising liberal offer.*

Address: L. E. ASHER, President
BANNER TAILORING CO.
Dept. 445 CHICAGO

Stem Wind & Set WATCH, RING AND CHAIN GIVEN

We positively give a genuine American Stem Wind and Set Watch, beautifully designed case, [illegible]



Home Supply Co., Dept. 108, Chicago, Ill.

Effective Tonic for Nervousness

BEFORE TAKING:	AFTER TAKING:
You have headaches.	Your health improves.
Your back aches.	The aches are banished.
Your ambition gone.	Your ambition returns.
Your extremities cold.	Your blood circulates vigorously.
Your nerves shattered.	Your nervousness disappears
Your heart flutters.	Your heart becomes normal.
Your kidneys inactive.	Your organic troubles corrected.
Your vitality low.	Your vitality renewed
Your confidence lost.	Your confidence restored
Your life seems hopeless.	Your life becomes brighter

Your symptoms tell you that you need a powerful, vitalizing tonic to regain all that you have lost. Try Cadomene Tablets, they are guaranteed to help or you get your money back. Good for "run-down" men, and weak nervous women. Price $1.00 at all good drug stores, or sent direct upon receipt of $1.00, by BLACKBURN PRODUCTS CO., Dayton, Ohio.

3 Grain
Cadomene
Tablets

No Money In Advance

Sensational Elgin Watch Bargain

Just send coupon—no money. We will at once send you this elegant 16-size, new thin model, open face, 15 jewel, fine gold filled, genuine Elgin Watch. No deposit—no references—no security or red tape of any kind. The Elgin is the recognized standard of time-keeping accuracy the World over. Fully guaranteed and with ordinary care will last a life time. The case is gold filled, dust and damp proof, guaranteed for 20 years. Watch comes to you complete in handsome silk-velvet presentation case. When it arrives, if you think it the greatest watch bargain you ever saw and just the watch you want

THIS MODEL
FINE GOLD FILLED ELGIN
15 JEWELS

Then Pay Us $2.00

and keep the watch. Then pay us the $15.65 balance at the rate of $[illegible] per month until [illegible] Bargain Price of only $17.65 is paid. If not satisfactory return at our expense. Only 1,000 to be sent out on these amazing terms so quick action is necessary. Order by No. 9G581. Mail coupon right now

HARTMAN
Furniture & Carpet Co.
Jewelry Dept. 2
39th & Wentworth Ave.
Chicago, Ill.

Hartman Furn. & Carpet Co.
Jewelry Dept. 2
39th & Wentworth Ave., Chicago

Send Watch No 9G581 If satisfactory, I agree to pay $2.00 upon arrival and balance at the rate of $[illegible] per month until your Special Price of only $17.65 is paid in full If not satisfactory, I will return same within 30 days.

Name.......................................

Address.......................................

City.......................................State.

WANTED---30,000 BOYS

WE HAVE 30,000 boys who sell our great papers, The Saturday Blade, Chicago Ledger, Farming Business and Lone Scout. Thousands of them earn from $1.00 to $5.00 a week. People in every town and R. F. D. know our great papers and we have received thousands of letters from people asking the name of the local agent so they could buy the papers from them. We want 30,000 more agents, so that there will be an agent in every town and R. F. D. route, and to get them we have a wonderful new plan which gives our agents cash profits on every paper they sell and

VALUABLE PREMIUMS AND FREE APPOINTMENT TO THE LONE SCOUTS OF AMERICA

No experience is necessary, the less experience you have the better. We show you when you start just where to get the customers, how to sell the papers and just what to do. No town or R. F. D. route is too small to sell our papers in Thousands of our agents in the smallest towns and R. F. D. routes are making the biggest money every week and are getting the valuable premiums. Remember, you can't lose anything. We send the papers all in one bundle so that they come to you all at one time on Friday. You have a paper to sell to every man, woman and boy. We show you just how to build up a route of regular customers that means steady profits every week.

IT IS EASY TO GET STARTED TODAY

but you must hurry, for the agencies are being grabbed up quickly by boys. It takes no money to start. There is no expense or risk to you at any time. All we ask is that you do as we say. Will you? Just fill out the blank below and we will send you a complete agent's outfit absolutely free and your first week's supply of papers.

W. D. BOYCE CO., DEPT. 2, 512 N. DEARBORN ST., CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

I accept the agency for your 4 papers. Send me as many copies of each as you think I can sell the first week. I will be pleased to receive my Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts and badge and booklet of instructions from Chief Totem FREE. Also tell me how to get the valuable premiums.

Name

Street or R. F. D. No..

Town State

Ned Castleman's Nerve

Or, A Million at Stake

By Captain Jack Judson

[Copyright 1916 by W. D. Boyce Co.]

Begun in No. 48, November 25. Subscriptions can begin with that issue or back copies can be obtained from news stands, our agents or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER X.

A COOL BEAUTY.

NED had no doubt that he was in the power of Basil Batch, who, after mesmerizing him, had brought him to that strange place presided over by the misshapen man. There seemed no escape.

He leaned back in his chair determined to keep his wits about him, and for some minutes he was wide awake. But at last, as he was looking at a portrait on the wall before him, a singular feeling took possession of him. The eyes of the portrait seemed imbued with life. While they did not move, they certainly possessed living power, for when he attempted to turn his head he discovered that he was incapable of doing so.

He was not going to sleep, but he was surely under the influence of something supernatural! Gradually the light went out. He was lifted from the chair, but he could not resist. He was in the hands of some man, but yet he could not see him.

Some time later—he did not know how long—he opened his eyes. He saw the stars above him; he heard the swish of waters; he saw a man ahead seated in a boat, while he himself was lying on his back with thongs about hands and feet.

It was a beautiful night. A cool wind fanned his face. He could look over the gunwale of the boat and see the glimmering of lights far away. Whither was he going—to his final doom?

He tried to make out the features of the man in the boat, but this was impossible. The face was turned from him, but he fancied that if he had called the man Basil Batch he would not be far from wrong.

The boat seemed almost drifting with the tide. The [illegible] was just dallying with the oars, that was all.

At length Ned watched him no longer. He closed his eyes and gave himself up to fate. He was going somewhere, that he knew. He was helpless with the water beneath him and the stars overhead. And there was no one to lift a hand in his behalf, and no one to send him back to the trail he had lately left.

* * * * * * *

"What has become of the boy, Doris? He hasn't read to me for three nights."

It was Hector Iliff, the aged millionaire who asked the question, and Doris, his niece, stood off pale and distracted, holding her breath.

"I have discovered something that puzzles me," continued the old man. "Money has been missing from the safe. Where it went I do not know. It is very strange. I shall have to consult Mr. Batch when he comes again."

At mention of the name the girl started forward. She stopped in front of the millionaire and laid her hand on his shoulder. Their eyes met.

"Uncle," said she, and her voice quavered, "I must tell you something."

"Well, go on, child."

"I have never run counter to your will, for you have been good to me, taking me into your home when I was an orphan and making me your heir."

"Yes, I loved your mother, girl, because she was my only sister."

"I do not know what has become of the boy, Ned. He disappeared from this house three nights ago and under strange circumstances, and I fear that foul play is afoot."

"How can that be?"

"Margie, the maid, says that she found his bed tumbled and —"

"But he had no reason to leave," broke in Hector Iliff. "I was paying him well for his services."

"And he was satisfied. Something has happened to him. I feel it."

"You don't think he has enemies?"

"He has enemies," said Doris, in firm tones calculated to impress Hector Iliff. "You remember that on the sixteenth, according to promise, I am to become the wife of Basil Batch."

"Yes, yes."

"I gave the promise for your sake, not for mine. I would do anything in the world for you, for you have been good to me. I don't love the man; I never can."

"But he seems a nice man," said Hector Iliff. "I doubt not he is honest. I have invested some thousands in the Great Alaska Diamond Company, which he helps to manage, and——"

"I believe your money is lost," interrupted Doris. "From what the Countess has told me, Barrow & Batch are the greatest rascals in the city."

"But she may be prejudiced."

"She professes to know. She has told me of more than one person whom they had caught in their net."

"Impossible!"

"Time will tell," went on Doris, shutting her lips hard. "Have you ever found yourself going to sleep in the presence of Basil Batch?"

"I confess that I sometimes feel queer when he is here."

"That is it. The man can hypnotize one."

Hector Iliff looked up into the girl's face with eyes filled with genuine wonder.

"Do you think he had used his art upon me?" he asked.

"Heaven knows! You say you have lost money in a mysterious manner?"

"I have."

"How much?"

"Nearly eight thousand dollars."

"That much?" exclaimed Doris, almost recoiling.

"Yes."

"Now, let me speak about the marriage."

"Go on, dear."

"I believe these two men, Barrow & Batch, are at the bottom of the whole thing. They don't want the boy in the house, because their enemy, the Countess, got him the job. They may even have made way with him."

"Surely Mr. Batch would not stoop to a thing like that."

"You do not know the evil that is abroad in this city," persisted the girl. "There are men here who will do anything."

"I know there are evil men and always will be," smiled Hector Iliff. "But I cannot think that such a man as Mr. Batch would be guilty of crime."

The beautiful girl took a long breath.

"Do you want to break the engagement?" suddenly asked the old man.

At that moment the doorbell rang and the maid's footsteps were heard in the hall.

Suddenly the library door opened and the well-groomed figure of Basil Batch made its appearance. The face of the girl went whiter than before.

As he advanced, he bowed to Doris and took a seat in front of Hector Iliff. With her lips compressed Doris came between the two men and looked Basil fairly in the face. The great scoundrel averted his gaze.

"I have just brought you something," he said suddenly, turning to her as he took something wrapped in a jeweler's tissue paper from his pocket.

Her eyes became riveted upon it as he unwrapped the covering. It was a beautiful diamond ring set with a brilliant, and as he held it up to the light the stone flashed gorgeously.

"It is beautiful!" exclaimed the old man, whose eyes were dazzled.

"A triumph of the jeweler's art," said Basil. "It is your engagement ring, and I chose it from many specimens."

At that moment the girl's breast heaved with excitement and her dark eyes flashed. She pushed it away when he extended it, and a cloud settled over the man's countenance.

"I accept it upon one condition," said she, looking Basil squarely in the face.

"And that is——"

"That you tell me what has become of Ned Castleman."

"But Doris, dear, he may not know," exclaimed Hector Iliff.

"He does know!" cried Doris, drawing back and planting herself firmly on the carpet. "His countenance shows it, uncle. He knows where the boy is at this moment."

"You must not accuse one so hastily without proof," said the old man.

"But I have the proof," was the answer.

Putting her hand into her bosom, Doris drew out a small watchfob with a gold pendant, which she held in her outstretched hand.

"Margie, the maid, found this in the boy's bedroom," she went on. "I have seen you wearing this very charm, Basil Batch. Tell me where the boy is."

The man sat like one riveted to his chair. He transfixed his evil eyes upon the girl, but there was no controlling influence in them now.

"What have you done with the boy?" she went on, her voice ringing out loud and clear. "Whither have you taken him and why?"

"My dear girl——"

"I want no prevarication," she broke in. "I want the truth. I will have nothing else. Where is the boy?"

Basil, with some difficulty, got upon his feet, his eyes blazing like a maddened lion's.

"I did not come here to be insulted," he stammered. "I came to seal our match with the ring——"

"And it will never be sealed till you tell me what you have done with the boy. Until you have done so uncle may disinherit me and drive me a beggar into the street. I will not ask to touch a penny of his wealth. I can face the world and make my own living. You were in Ned's room when you lost your charm, for no one else wore it but yourself."

Basil was silent.

"It is seven o'clock now. If the boy is not back here by midnight the engagement is broken."

"But, child——"

"Hear me thru, uncle," interjected Doris, as calm now as a summer breeze. "For your sake I will keep my promise with this man if he plays fair. If he has taken the boy off his trail for a purpose I will not marry him. You can turn me out."

Hector Iliff fixed his weary eyes upon his visitor.

"Tell the girl the truth," said he. "I can't believe that you have done any wrong, but Doris believes you have."

Basil got his nerve back by a prodigious effort.

"I never touched the boy," he growled. "Do you think I'm a bandit?"

"The Countess says you are more than that," Doris sent fairly into his teeth. "See that the boy comes back by midnight."

"What I cannot do I cannot," was the reply. "I—I lost my charm on the street a week ago. Some one must have found it."

There was a gleam of derision in Doris' eyes.

"I'll prove my honesty," Basil went on snappishly. "I will not rest under this suspicion."

Three minutes later Hector Iliff and Doris were alone.

"Uncle——" she began, and then recoiled with a cry. The scene had been too much for the old man; he had fainted.

CHAPTER XI.

FREE ONCE MORE.

WHEN Ned came to his senses he made the discovery that he had not been taken very far by his captor, whom he rightly decided to be none other than Basil Batch.

Instead of being rowed out to sea and dumped overboard, as he feared would be his doom, he had been conveyed across the river, and was the occupant of a certain house in Jersey. For a few moments he wondered if English Julia was again to be his keeper, but he was soon undeceived on this point, for the door of the room creaked when a key was turned in the lock, and a neatly dressed young man entered, locking the portal after him.

This personage looked at Ned, and then took a chair near the one window of the apartment, but in a position from which he could watch the young captive. The jailer was as silent as a clam.

"I say," said the boy, at last wearing out his patience, "you have no right to keep me here."

There was no sign of a reply.

"I know I was brought to this house by Basil Batch, one of the greatest ras-

Kidney Disorder

(BY DR. L. C. BABCOCK.)

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cals out of jail, and I demand that I be at once released."

He might as well have addressed a statue of stone, for there was no answer, save a movement of the young man's hands to his mouth indicating that he was dumb. Presently our friend was left alone, and the key had clicked in the lock with an ominous sound.

The night waned and the morning came. It was bright outside, as the young prisoner could see, but he was as secure in his cage as one could be. His meals were brought to him at regular hours, and he could not complain of them, for they were good and wholesome. Evidently Basil Batch did not intend to starve him.

"It's all right," said Batch to his partner, the night after Ned's abduction. "I've got the bird caged for good until after the event."

"You're sure o' that, eh?" was the reply, accompanied by a grin. "I thought I had him in the toils once, but he eluded me."

"But this time he's got a jailer who won't argue the case with him," Basil answered. "His jailer can't talk."

"He must be a mute?"

"That's just what he is," smiled Batch. "I generally do things up brown when I go about them."

Boris Barrow turned to his desk and bent his head over some papers which were lying thereon.

"Who put this there?" he suddenly exclaimed, picking up one of the documents and tossing it over to his partner.

Mr. Batch's face grew white as he read.

"I'm sure I don't know," he said, glancing at Barrow. "You keep the door locked, don't you?"

"Always."

"Well, the woman's been here."

"How did she get in?"

"You'll have to ask her," was the answering snarl. "She is still after us."

At that moment footsteps fell upon the ears of the couple, and both looked toward the door.

"Don't let her in!" cried Basil Batch, springing from his chair.

He was too late, for the next second the door swung open, and in stalked the Countess with the blandest countenance imaginable.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said she, with a slight bow. "You see I'm here again."

The two men did not reply.

"I don't want quite as much as I took before," she went on. "I'll take that thousand you got from the old newsdealer, Jackson, for stock in the Alaska Diamond Company."

The face of Barrow seemed to turn purple.

"We don't know him," he growled.

"What short memories you men have!" said the Countess. "A thousand isn't much."

"It's more than we've got."

"You lie!"

The woman advanced a step and stopped before the rascals, whom she looked squarely in the eye.

"Shell out," said she, in stern tones. "And what is more, if you don't something will happen. I told a plain-clothes man to wait for me below."

The purpled faces suddenly went white.

"You're Satan in silk," hissed Batch.

"Thanks for the compliment," smiled the Countess. "I'm going out of town for a week, but old Jackson wants his money."

A change took place in the men's faces.

"Well, here's your stuff," said Barrow, taking the bills from a drawer. "Now, do us the pleasure of keeping your distance."

She doubled up the money and stowed it away.

When she was gone Barrow leaned toward his companion and said with a leer:

"If she keeps her word we're all right. We won't be here a week from now."

"But my wedding?"

"Oh, you'll be out of the city, too," smirked Barrow. "What are you going to do with the boy?""

"I've got my plans laid," was the reply. "My dummy knows what to do. He's one of these servile fellows who will do anything if well paid."

The next day and the next found Ned still in the old house in Jersey. The mute came in but seldom and watched him a few moments, then took his departure.

Ned chafed under his confinement. He wanted to be free. He knew that Doris' wedding day was near at hand, and he had promised himself that he would not let the infamous ceremony take place.

When Basil Batch left old Iliff's house with the girl's ultimatum ringing in his ears, he was by no means at his ease. If Ned was not back at midnight the marriage was off, and if he set the boy free the plot for a million would fail.

For some time he walked the streets in a dejected mood. His brow was darker than ever, and he now and then thought he heard footsteps behind him.

"I can't let him out, for he will tell all," thought he. "Why not give his jailer certain orders and take the chances?"

He crossed the river and made his way toward Ned's prison. There was murder in his glowering eyes.

When he reached the house, he watched it a few moments and then entered. Intuition told the rascal that something was wrong. He groped along the hall and then stood stock-still. The very silence unnerved him.

"Where's Dummy?" he asked himself.

At last he found a door and pushed it open. The room into which he looked was as dark as the caves of the dead. Taking a match from his pocket, he scratched it along the wall, and when the little stick was fairly ablaze he held it above his head and leaned forward.

"My God!" burst from his throat.

Outstretched on the floor before him lay his little jailer. Ned was not to be seen.

In a moment Batch was bending over the youth, trying to bring him back to life, for he had discovered that life was not extinct.

"What's happened?" he cried.

The mute recognized his employer and smiled sadly. Crawling to a table, he sat down and drew a tablet from an inner pocket, and Basil Batch, breathless and trembling, bent over him with a pallid face.

"The boy is gone," wrote the mute. "He is a little tiger. He took me unawares. I tried to kill him, but——"

He stopped and looked up into Batch's face.

"Go on," exclaimed Batch, unnerved.

"He fell upon me with a rung of the chair yonder," wrote the mute.

"When did this happen?" scrawled Batch, seizing the pencil.

"Tonight," was the written answer.

Basil looked at his watch and saw that it was ten o'clock.

"You couldn't fight him off?" he wrote again.

The mute shook his head.

"He was a whirlwind. Why did you put me in charge of him?" wrote the mute. "See what he wrote before he went away," and he pulled a bit of crumpled paper from his pocket and spread it out before his employer.

Basil snatched it up, and holding it nearer the light, read as follows:

"You're not so much to blame, Dummy; therefore I spare your life, but somebody is going to suffer for this. It's the electric chair for one and Sing Sing for another. I hope I haven't hurt you much. Good-by.

"NED CASTLEMAN."

Basil threw the writing away and bolted for the door.

Fifteen minutes later he broke in upon Barrow's slumbers and shook the snoring man into wakefulness.

"The jig is up!" he almost yelled, as Barrow's eyes bulged and his bloated face turned all colors.

"What's happened?" he stammered.

"The boy's got away, and he says it's the chair for one of us and Sing Sing for another."

A cold sweat stood out on Boris' forehead.

"What does he mean by the chair?" he gasped.

"I don't know unless the killing of Old Condor."

There was a gasp and a groan, and Boris Barrow wilted as he fell back into the chair almost senseless.

CHAPTER XII.

ALADDIN'S LAMP.

IT WAS true, as the mute had informed Basil Batch, that Ned had effected his escape by a mad dash in which he had overpowered his young jailer. To get back to Hector Iliff's house was his first thought, but he had another mission which he wished to perform. He therefore made his way to the room of his friend, Gordon Tracey, the detective to whom he wanted to tell the story of his last adventure.

When Ned had finished his report, the detective said, with a satisfied smile:

"I have found the driver of the taxicab from which Old Condor was shot, and have a pretty good description of his fare."

"A big man?" asked the boy.

"Yes, and from the driver's descrip-

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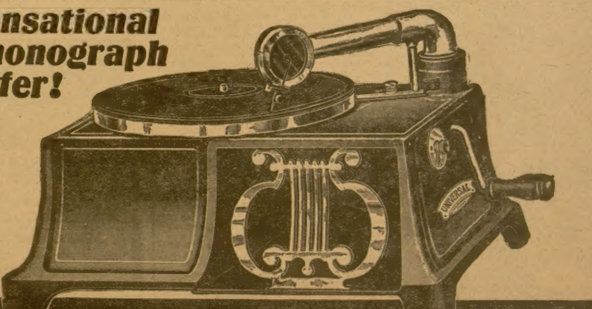

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tion, I think he must be Boris Barrow."

"The very man!" exclaimed Ned.

"I think the days of the Great Alaska Diamond Company are near their end," resumed the detective. "Now, you want to keep out of the clutches of those two rascals, for they are desperate and will not stop at anything."

"I am well aware of that," and Ned posted off to tell Doris that he was out of the toils once more.

As he was rounding a corner, he nearly collided with a man who was walking rapidly with lowered head and did not notice him.

"So you are out for a stroll," the boy said to himself as he put himself upon the man's track. "I'll just see whither you are going at this hour, so I can post Tracey."

Boris led Ned quite a chase, but at last turned into a certain house, shutting and locking the door behind him.

"Back to English Julia's, eh?" thought Ned. "I don't care to invade the place again, not even when I am not a prisoner."

If he could have followed Boris into the house, he would have seen him come face to face with the woman who had once been his jaileress. The woman was not in the best of humor, for she frowned when she looked at her visitor.

"I'm going away," said she. "I have determined to go back to the old home and try to live better."

Big Boris laughed. "The idea of you turning over a new leaf!" he sneered. "I wouldn't give a fig for your reformation. The next thing you'll be blackmailing Basil and me."

"I blackmail no one," was the angry retort. "I have been your tool long enough——"

Boris clinched his fists and strode toward English Julia, his deep-set eyes ablaze and his teeth shut hard.

"I'll just fix you so you won't peach!" he cried. "I'm not going to have you on my track."

The woman backed to the wall and faced Boris like a cornered lioness.

"Don't touch me!" she almost shrieked. "If you do——"

But the rascal was already upon her, and his hands were at her throat. Her face grew purple as he choked her, but he was merciless, and when he loosened his hold she sank to the floor like one dead.

"That's your lesson!" cried Boris. "What was that Basil said about one of us going to the chair? The jig is up. The boy has got away and will hand us over to the police, and I'm not going to be plucked like a dead pigeon."

He left the house, almost running in his eagerness to get as far from it as quickly as possible. He was a hunted man now and he knew it.

Meantime Ned had reached the Iliff home and had been welcomed by Doris and her uncle. He made his story as brief as possible, and was picking up his hat when the girl exclaimed:

"You're not going out again tonight?"

"I must go. If the birds suspect they will make a getaway, and the law will never get to deal with them. I will have no rest till both have been caught."

"But——"

"Let me have my way," interrupted Ned. "I have a mission to perform. I want to be 'in at the death,' as the fox hunters say."

Once more he was on the street. It was past midnight, but the lights of the great city were still ablaze.

Until dawn he scoured the city for Barrow and Batch. He knew he had saved the girl from becoming the wife of Basil Batch, but he wanted to complete his work.

The new day had fairly dawned when he ran across the very man he wanted to see—Gordon Tracey, the detective. A cab turning a corner rolled swiftly down the street toward the Jersey tunnel. Ned got a glimpse of one of the faces inside.

"There they go now!" he cried, clutching Gordon's arm. "The birds are taking flight."

It was the work of a moment for the detective to halt a taxicab, and he and Ned sprang inside.

"Keep that cab in sight," commanded Tracey. "Don't lose sight of it for a moment."

"I never forget my job," was the driver's reply, and the taxi bounded with lightning speed over the street.

It was a short chase, for the cab suddenly stopped and two men got out. Gordon Tracey, with a revolver in his hand, alighted at the same moment.

"There they are!" Ned exclaimed. "The big man is the one who killed Old Condor, and the little one is the serpent that stung me."

Tracey was as cool as cool could be. His arm went up [illegible] two men turned at sound of his ringing voice.

"Don't lift a hand!" said Tracey. "I want both of you."

Half an hour later the firm of Barrow & Batch had their quarters in a cell, and an iron door stood firmly between them and liberty.

"What did I tell you?" said Batch, with an ill face. "I told you it would be the chair and Sing Sing."

"No chair for me," growled Boris. "If you had only silenced the boy when you first netted him we wouldn't be in this predicament."

"I did my best, but he was too smart for me."

The following day Ned sat in the library of Hector Iliff's house reading to the old millionaire.

"I'm going to make you rich," said the old man, suddenly. "I owe so much to you."

"Don't mention it," returned Ned. "I have done Doris a good turn, and that is reward enough."

"But you shall have a-plenty," persisted Iliff. "But for you she would have become the wife of the greatest rascal in the land and—well, I don't know what would have become of me."

"The Countess knows," answered Ned, and at that moment the bell jingled and in walked the Countess herself.

"I've heard all about it," she exclaimed, with glowing countenance. "The two villains are at the end of their tether and I am completely satisfied."

"And your reward——"

"I've been rewarded. I have baffled the schemes of those two men who robbed my friends without mercy, and I think I have cause to rejoice."

Very little remains to be told. Before the law could wreak its vengeance upon Boris Barrow he was beyond its reach, for he hanged himself in his cell, but it took care of Basil Batch, who, instead of at an altar, found himself in Sing Sing, there to serve out a sentence which will end only with his life.

Old Hector Iliff persisted in saying that he was going to "do something" for Ned, who presently found himself one of the youngest brokers in the city, with Billy O'Neil as his assistant.

"It's like rubbing Aladdin's lamp, Billy," Ned said one day, turning to his friend. "I've got to pinch myself to find out that it isn't a dream."

"Yes. I don't think we'll go into the Great Alaska Diamond Company's business, eh, Ned?"

"Not much, Billy. Here's an announcement that Miss Doris is to marry a young man who will make her happy, and she won't become Mrs. Batch and be miserable for life. We're to attend the ceremony."

"That means new suits and a good time!"

"Yes, and the best part of it is that we've been instrumental in bringing about this happy event. With Boris Barrow dead and Basil Batch shut up for the rest of his life, I don't think there will be any more sojourns with English Julia and the boy mute."

And Ned looked up as the door opened, and lo! Doris and the Countess stood before them.

"We've just dropped in for a chat," said the millionaire's ward. "We've just been down on Fifth avenue looking at the new styles and——"

"And you boys are to go to Fittem & Fix, tailors, and pick out the best suits in their up-to-date establishment."

"Gee!" cried Billy, nearly falling from his chair. "Somebody's been rubbing Aladdin's lamp again!" and the little party laughed till their faces were pictures of intense happiness and satisfaction.

The End.

* * *

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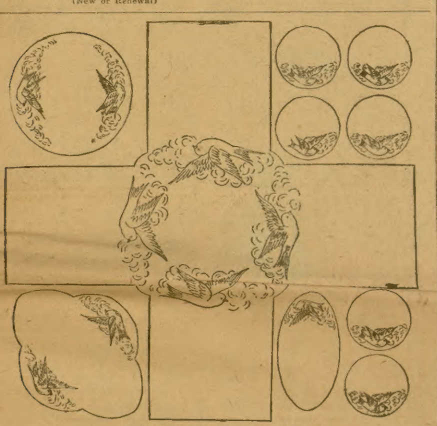

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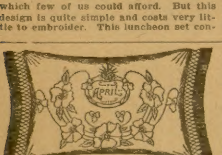
NO. 5067. BLUEBIRD LUNCHEON SET.—Every housekeeper knows how valuable is her collection of table linens. If one has to purchase these dainty linens completed they become a luxury which few of us could afford. But this design is quite simple and costs very little to embroider. This luncheon set consists of a lunch cloth, 34x34 inches; centerpiece, 11x11 inches; six doilies, 6x6 inches; tray cloth, 12x15 inches; and platter cloth, 6x12 inches, all of which are stamped in blue or white linen. We also include six skeins of embroidery floss in this offer. This complete set will be given for $1.50 in subscriptions to the Blade and the Ledger.



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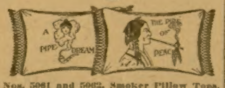

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NOS. 5061 AND 5062, SMOKER PILLOW TOPS.—If you intend to give a sofa pillow top to your brother or to a friend to help make his room cozy, give him one of these smoker pillow tops, which are tinted in elaborate colors on 17x21-inch tan ticking. You may have your choice of either of these pillow tops, including a back and four skeins of colored floss for working, if you will send us $1.00 for one year's subscription to the Blade or the Ledger. Order by number.

* * *

A Trial.

Jimmy Beamish had enlisted in his "group" and was training near Newcastle. His wife, on a visit to the "toon," became very ill. Thinking her end was near, she said:

"Jimmy, lad, where are ye gannen to bury me?"

"Well, Bess," he said, "Aa had thowts ov Newcassel."

"No, hinney," she said. "Aa cuddent lie in Newcassel. You must tyck me back to Durham. Aa waddent like to be buried about here."

"Tut, tut, Bess!" exclaimed Jimmy. "Think ov the expense ov tyckin' ye all the way to Durham."

"Aa cannat help it, Jimmy; ye'll hae te tyck me thor, for Aa cannat lie quiet in Newcassel."

Jimmy thought for a moment in silence.

"Weel, weel, Bess," he said, at last, "Aa'll tell ye whaat Aa'll de; Aa'll gie ye a trial in Newcassel, an' if ye divvent lie quiet thor, Aa'll tyck ye te Durham."

If you are going to submit a home-made set of answers, be sure you draw by hand (not trace them) each picture on a white sheet of paper 5x8 inches in size. Bind your drawings at the tops so they will not become loose or lost. You can secure the complete Outfit for only 50 cents, with which you can make three answers to each picture, and do not have to draw any pictures at all. Order your Outfit before December 23rd.

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140,370 LONE SCOUTS

In 59 Weeks, 140,370 Boys have taken the following pledge as members of Lone Scouts of America:

"I pledge my allegiance to my flag and the nation for which it stands, with liberty and justice for all. I will 'Do a Useful Thing Each Day,' and be worthy of the name, Lone Scout."

The Lone Scouts of America was incorporated in Washington, District of Columbia, in 1915. At the first meeting of the incorporators, by-laws were adopted and W. D. Boyce was elected **Chief Totem.** The first Lone Scout took the pledge on October 25, 1915.

1 The Lone Scouts of America is for all wide-awake, ambitious boys everywhere. Any boy who can understand the pledge is eligible to membership. The pledge is so worded as to make the organization world-wide, including any boy living under some other flag than the United States flag. The Lone Scouts of America encourages patriotism, but is not a military organization in any sense.

2 The purpose of the Lone Scouts of America is to give the boys all the advantages of the Boy Scout movement (which was started in the United States by W. D. Boyce, Chief Totem of the Lone Scouts) while permitting them to operate alone if it is not convenient for them to belong to Tribes. Woodcraft and Scouting are only a part of the instructions. The Lone Scout motto is: "Do a Useful Thing Each Day." Every boy who lives up to this motto is going to be a successful man.

3 There are no membership dues or fees to pay; no expensive equipment for boys or their parents to buy. The Lone Scouts of America is not a money-making proposition. The organization is supported by the sale of its weekly magazine, "Lone Scout," in which instructions are given the Scouts. "Lone Scout" is sold by news agents for 3 cents a copy. Subscription rates, 25 cents four months, 75 cents a year.

4 As a member progresses in his Scout work he is awarded Degrees with appropriate Badges, and these Degrees make up Lodges. Badges of the first three Degrees (Tepee Lodge) are shown on the left. After the Tepee Lodge comes the Totem Pole Lodge. A member in this Lodge is entitled to put up a Lone Scout Totem Pole, upon which is placed a record of his Degrees.

5 In applying for membership, fill out the Application Blank given below, and send it with 2-cent stamp.

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FIRST DEGREE BADGE (Bronze)
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THIRD DEGREE BADGE (Silver)
Lone Scout Indian

W. D. BOYCE, Chief Totem,
500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP G

CHIEF TOTEM, 500 North Dearborn Street, Chicago, Ill.

Date……………………………………1916.

I am ready, with consent of my parents or guardian, to take the Lone Scout Pledge, which I have read. Herewith find 2 cents in stamps to pay for mailing Certificate of Membership in the Lone Scouts of America, First Degree Instructions and Tribe Booklet.

Name……………………………………… Age……………
Town……………………………………… State……………
St. No., P. O., or R. F. D.………………………………………

THE FAIRY CORNER

WATCHING FOR SANTA CLAUS.

Our baker, when he climbs the stairs,
To leave us bread and buns,
Takes four long steps with anxious care,
And then some little ones.

Sometimes when I look in the street,
I see some solemn cops
Take four long steps along the beat,
And then some little trots.

I see the children come from school,
A group of tiny tots,
Take four long steps, then swing around,
And take some little trots.

Now when on Christmas Santa Claus
Comes down our chimney flue,
I'm going to watch for him, because
I think he'll fox trot, too.

And maybe he will trot so fast,
And get so far away,
That I won't get any pretty toys
From him on Christmas day.

But I am going to fool him;
I'll take my little chair,
And sit right by that chimney
And watch for him right there.

And when I hear some long steps,
And then some little ones,
And then some fox trots in between,
I'll know here Santa comes.

And then I'll holler just as loud,
Up that big chimney flue,
"Don't go by here, dear Santa Claus,
I'm waiting here for you.

"Just drop your toys right down here,
And when you go away,
Don't you forget I'll watch for you
Again next Christmas day."

⁂

A Christmas Princess.

Once upon a time there was a little fairy Princess. You would not have called her a Princess, for she did not live in a palace, nor wear a golden crown, nor have a troop of pages to hold up her long satin train as Princesses have been accustomed to do since time began.

To tell the truth, she didn't even know that she was a Princess herself—much less a fairy one.

For ages before, a wise old fairy godmother, called Dame Nature, had decreed that all the children of the royal family should pass the early years of their lives disguised as ugly crawling things, so that they might grow up untouched by the flattery and falsity of the court circle.

The little Princess, of course, knew nothing of all this. A maple leaf had been her only cradle and she lived contentedly, eating of the juicy leaves and basking in the warm sunshine.

There were no looking-glasses to reflect her ugliness, and her older brothers and [illegible] long come into their inheritance and gave her no thought.

She might have lived thus, who knows how long, if one day the Spirit of Adventure had not whispered in her ear.

"Silly one," he said, "you know nothing of the beautiful bright world that lies spread out just below you. The way is easy. Why do you fear?"

Soon she was slowly making her way down the slim green branches to the stouter brown one, till she reached the broad trunk highway that ran straight to the land of her desire.

It was smooth and easy to travel upon and she knew not the peril of passing feet.

Suddenly a great giant—so it seemed to her—came striding by.

"Ugh! What a horrid ugly caterpillar," said a loud voice, "Wait till I kick it off the sidewalk."

And a large foot was lifted and the poor little Princess caught up bodily, tossed high in the air, to fall all bruised and shaken on the friendly grass.

Here she lay, terrified and suffering for many hours, till Dame Nature at last took pity on her and came to her help.

"But what must I do, dear godmother?" she asked.

"Come, little Princess, your time is at hand," she said kindly. "Now you must pay very careful attention and do just as I tell you.

"First, you'll need a good stout leaf with a good strong stem. Yes, that one will do. Now roll the edges of the leaf together and sew them fast.

"But what shall I sew them with?" asked the Princess.

"Wait a bit and I'll show you," and Dame Nature touched the little Princess just under her chin with the [illegible] wand, and out flowed a long silky thread.

Then she showed her how to catch the thread with her caterpillar feet, and wind it around and around the stem of the leaf till it was fastened tightly to the branch.

"Now you must line the inside," said her instructor, and in went the little caterpillar and began weaving busily. In a marvelously short time the little house had heavy silken hangings on every wall.

"Now draw together the open end," commanded Dame Nature.

This done, the good fairy touched the little home with her magic wand. The little caterpillar Princess felt her green gown splitting down the back.

She wriggled out of it, feeling very queer and drowsy, for somehow her legs seemed to have vanished with her dress. But before she could wonder further she sank into a deep, dreamless sleep.

For many days after her long sleep began she swung to and fro in her snug little cradle. Then one day a small boy walking thru the wood spied her.

"Gee! I believe that is a new cocoon," he exclaimed. "Guess I'll take it home and see if anything will come out of it."

One day a bustle of excitement ran thru the house. Mysterious packages found their way to the nursery, and busy fingers tucked them quickly out of sight. Little feet pattered outside the locked door, and inquisitive eyes vainly endeavored to peep thru the keyhole.

How could little Princess know that a ruddy little Santa Claus nodded on one side of her and a big baby doll smiled saucily on the other? Near her a huge tree bent under the weight of beautiful things that it bore.

When the first pale sunbeam came creeping in thru the dormer windows, touching all with gold, the fairy godmother softly floated down the shining pathway.

She was all clothed in black and her little wrinkled face was radiant with joy, for she loved the little Princess.

The magic wand once more gently touched the little home. Slowly the ugly, close-fitting brown garment fell away, slowly a sleepy little moth Princess with crumpled gown burst thru the silken walls and crawled out into the sunshine.

The ugly caterpillar disguise was gone indeed, and in its place appeared a beautiful winged being.

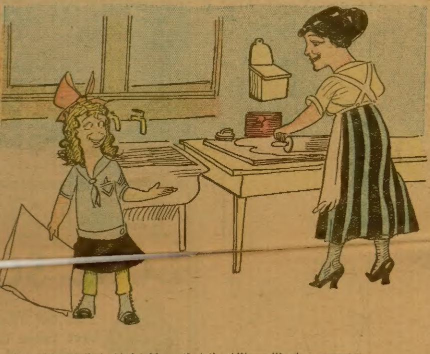
Slowly she felt them bear her aloft, straight to the nearest branch tip, and her delicate plumes touched the sweetmeat as she poised before it.

A rush of little feet sounded outside the door, and in ran two little white-robed figures breathless with suspense.

"Oh! Oh! Oh! Santa did come after all!" shouted one. Then a pair of bright eyes caught sight of the little Princess.

"Oh, Harold! Harold! Come quick. See what's hatched out of the cocoon."

To them she was simply a beautiful moth. How could they know that a Princess had come to her own?



Dorothy—"A little bird told me that the Allies will win, mamma!"
Mother—"What kind of a bird, darling?"
Dorothy—"An English sparrow!"

⁂

A Santa Claus Trap.

Le peti' Bertlot got even with the bear family and squared the account of the Pennsylvania children. He is a little resident of Louisiana, and, tho he is so young that he hasn't known much about Santa Claus until the Christmas just past, he is a great hunter. To tell the whole truth, however, le peti' Bertlot didn't intend to catch a bear. He was after bigger game. It was Santa Claus himself that he laid a trap for.

Le peti' Bertlot is what the neighbors call him, and in the language of southern Louisiana that means "young Bertlot." His father is Big Bertlot, and they are French people even tho they are Americans. They are of the people that live in the swamps and the fertile wet lands near the mouth of the Mississippi and speak their own dialect of French, for their grandfathers or great-grandfathers came from France.

The Bertlot family are American, however, because they know Santa Claus. They don't have Santa Claus in France. But little Bertlot's mother and father told him about Santa Claus, and so he knew just as much as if he had heard the story in English. He knew that Santa Claus would come down the chimney, because the Bertlot house is a log house and the chimney is big enough to take a horse thru—almost.

Little Bertlot thought and thought over the matter. He settled it that he would hang up his stocking. He is naturally a bad boy, and so he laid a trap for Santa Claus. He took some enormous fishhooks, which his father uses for catching sharks in the Gulf of Mexico, near by, and he hung them up above the hearth, out of the way of the ordinary hooks that were used to hang kettles on. And then he went to bed and slept and, awakening in the morning, found that Santa Claus had come and filled the hanging stocking, but had escaped the shark hooks. Little Bertlot was puzzled, but he was so much interested in his Christmas presents that he did not find time to take down the hooks.

It was a night or two later that the Bertlot household was aroused by a racket in the chimney. There was a bumping and a thumping and a scratching and a scrambling and a squealing and a squalling, and Big Bertlot, running out with his rifle, found a big black bear half in the chimney and half in the fireplace and entirely tangled up in Little Bertlot's shark hooks. Big Bertlot shot the bear and the neighborhood ate bear steak for a week. Moreover, there is a bearskin rug that will be put down before the Bertlot hearth after the skin is cured and softened.

Little Bertlot is looking forward to next Christmas. He knows that his trap is right in theory, because it did catch the bear coming down the chimney, and he is going to try it again next Christmas. He thinks that maybe Santa Claus will not be so careful next time and will get caught and spill a lot of toys down on the hearth for the maker of the trap. But of course that will never happen. Santa Claus has been escaping traps for years and years.

⁂

CHRISTMAS BELLS.

Loud the Christmas bells are ringing,
And the drifting snow
Lies in wreaths of pearly whiteness,
O'er the world below.

CHORUS.
Christ is come, and earth rejoices,
Chant the words again.
Peace on earth, good will to mortals,
Praise to God. Amen.

Far away in Bethlehem watching
O'er a manger low
Angels chanted sweet the tidings
In the long ago.

"Peace on earth," the hills re-echoed
To the glad refrain;
And the Christmas bells, loud pealing,
Breathe the words again.

Christmas brings a flood of gladness,
So rejoice who may,
In his love, whose birth hath given
This glad Christmas day.

⁂

Wanted the Accessories.

He (ardently)—"I forget everything but that I love you."

She—"That's the trouble; you forget to bring me bonbons, bouquets and opera tickets."

⁂

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